

# THE WORLD OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

MYSTERY  
MAGAZINE



Conan Doyle as  
Sherlock

New Holmes Mystery:  
The Adventures of the  
Mad Midwife



A Visit From A Stranger

Sir Arthur  
Conan Doyle's



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WITH Richard

Basil

Wendy

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BRUCE · ATWILL · CARRADINE · BORLAND

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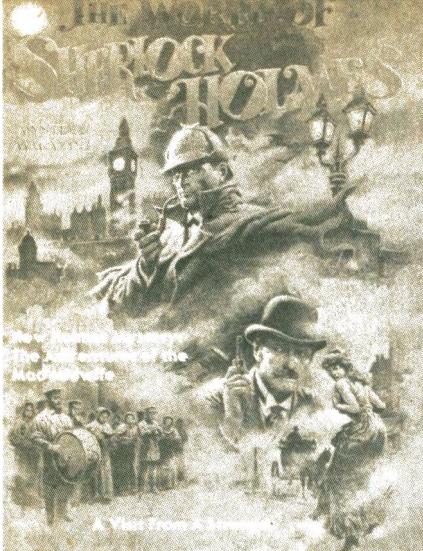
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# THE WORLD OF SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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# Conan Doyle as Sherlock

*J*n the summer of 1906, Louise's health failed rapidly. On June 30, Conan Doyle wrote to his mother and brother Innes indicating that the end was near. Louise's mother and the house-keeper kept vigil with him. Louise passed away at three o'clock on the morning of July 4. She was forty-nine years old.

Conan Doyle was devastated. It is not known whether he attempted to contact her through mediums, but he seems unlikely to have done so, since at that time he was still uncertain about the possibility of communication with spirits. The funeral was simple. Louise was buried under a stone cross at Hindhead, with sculptured vine leaves trailing over the grave. After Louise's death, Conan Doyle became ill from exhaustion and anxiety, and was barely able to pursue his normal schedule of work. It was during this painful period, toward the end of 1906, that he picked up a newspaper called *The Umpire*, containing articles of general interest as well as sporting items, and noticed an article by George Edalji, the son of a vicar in Great Wyrley, a mining village in Staffordshire.

Edalji's story was a remarkable one. It had begun in 1874, with the marriage of his father, a Parsee Indian, to an English girl. George had been born in 1876. The family, happy in the small parish, had lived a quiet and uneventful life until 1888. In that year, a series of vicious and obscene messages about the Edaljis, obviously inspired by racial prejudice, were inscribed on the walls of outbuildings in the parish. A disaffected servant girl was arrested and charged with libel, but she was released for lack of sufficient evidence. Soon after her departure from Great Wyrley, more messages began to appear. These, in a different handwriting, were thrust through windows onto sitting-room floors. Tradesmen received orders for goods, supposedly from the Edaljis, and when they made their deliveries, the Edaljis, who were unable to pay for them, denied they had ever sent the orders. Controversial letters appeared in the Staffordshire newspapers, attributed to the Reverend Edalji but not written by him.

In 1892, a key which had been stolen from Walsall Grammar School suddenly turned up on the doorstep of the vicarage, and the local chief constable, the Honorable G. R. Anson, accused the sixteen-year-old George Edalji, who was a pupil at the school, of stealing it. Edalji protested vainly that if he had stolen the key he certainly would not have left it on his own doorstep, but he was not cleared of suspicion. Letters continued to appear at the Edaljis, vilifying George's parents; and Captain Anson accused him of being their author.

In February, 1903, Great Wyrley was back in the news. That night, a local farmer found one of his horses hideously mutilated, its stomach slit down the middle, almost exposing the entrails. In April, a cow, a horse, a sheep, and other cattle were found butchered in the same way. On August 17, a pit pony was found identically killed. The police arrested George Edalji and accused him of the crimes. From jail, awaiting trial, Edalji wrote letters to the press offering his life's savings of

twenty-five pounds to anyone who could supply a clue which would lead to the discovery of the guilty party. The sensitive, rather effeminate young man frequently cried in his cell; and his parents, under severe criticism by the Church of England, suffered unbearably. His coat was examined, and the police announced it had animal blood-stains on it. His razor was supposed to have tiny adherences of animal hair. A police surgeon later claimed he had picked twenty-nine horsehairs from Edalji's coat sleeves. These, he said, matched the hair on the hide of the mutilated horse. Edalji's boots were examined, and the heels were supposed to have mud on them which matched the soil near the scene of one of the crimes.

A hysterical farmer's son named Harry Green confessed to the crimes, but the police rejected his statement and apparently arranged for him to leave at once for South Africa because his presence was inconvenient. Edalji was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, and a handwriting expert positively identified the writing on the numerous vicious notes as matching Edalji's own.

Conan Doyle read the article describing these events, written after Edalji's release from prison for good behavior, with the utmost astonishment. He immediately concluded that Edalji was innocent, and decided to see to it that the young man was exonerated and reinstated in his job as a junior barrister. In January, Edalji came to London to meet Conan Doyle at the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross. Conan Doyle arrived late, delayed by lunch at the Reform Club. He saw the young man sitting in the lobby, reading a newspaper. A significant detail immediately caught his attention. Edalji was peering at the paper painfully through thick pebble glasses, obviously only just able to make out the words. The mutilations had all taken place at night. Conan Doyle knew that Edalji could not have effectively overpowered large animals and aimed a razor precisely at the vulnerable points, even with the aid of a light, if he was almost blind. It was the oculist as well as the detective in Conan Doyle that made him observe this detail.

He studied Edalji intently as they conversed. A shrewd judge of character, he concluded that his companion was an honest man. His myopic eyes filled with tears behind his glasses, his small body trembling, Edalji was an object of pity. Conan Doyle, to make sure he was not faking, questioned him closely on the movements he had made on the nights of the crimes. His alibis seemed watertight. Moreover, when Conan Doyle took Edalji to see eye specialists in Wimpole Street, their verdict confirmed Conan Doyle's diagnosis: the young man would have great difficulty in moving about at night.

Impressed by Edalji's sweet character, Conan Doyle traveled to Great Wyrley to investigate. He was moved by the parents; grief-stricken, they were eager to help him in any way they could. He decided to follow the course which Edalji would have taken to reach the spot where the last animal victim, a horse, had been butchered. The place could be reached only on foot, by

*Excerpted from The Adventures of Conan Doyle. Copyright © 1976 by Charles Higham. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York.*



*Conan Doyle, the now celebrated and successful author in his study; circa 1915. (THE ADVENTURES OF CONAN DOYLE, The Life of the Creator of Sherlock Holmes by Charles Higham. Published by W.W. Norton)*

one of three routes. The direct route involved crossing the tracks, rather badly grown with grass, of the North-Western Railway. Conan Doyle, taking a light, walked down the vicarage garden, over a grass mound, and across the tracks, which almost tripped him as he went. He found that he had to traverse hedges, climb over half-hidden ditches, and make his way through an overgrown meadow. It was a long and difficult walk which took up much of the night, and which Edalji most certainly could not have managed.

Conan Doyle returned to the vicarage, and at breakfast, told the parson and his wife about his observations. Their gratitude was touching. He next walked across the alternative routes, and came to the same conclusion: only a man with good eyesight and a robust constitution could have made the journey on a storm-swept night and attacked a powerful farm horse.

He then went to the local police station, taking a written authorization, the nature of which was never disclosed by him, from Scotland Yard. This permitted him, no doubt to the fury of the local constabulary, to make an investigation of Edalji's "incriminating" clothes. He examined the horsehair on the coat sleeves and was appalled to discover that for the inquiry the coat had been bundled together with a severed portion of the horse's mane. He analyzed the bloodstains and found that they came from undercooked meat which Edalji had eaten on the night of the crime. The wet condition of the coat and boots was of no significance, since Edalji admitted that he had taken a short walk that night. Conan Doyle took samples of the mud on the boots and found that, contrary to the police statement, it did not match the loam in the meadow. The hair adhering to the razor was not animal but human, and matched that of Edalji's father.

The problem now, apart from having Edalji cleared, was to identify the real culprit. Conan Doyle, convinced that a former fellow pupil of George Edalji's was responsible, made detailed inquiries at the local school. He then proceeded to London and published in the London *Daily Telegraph* a series of devastating articles, later issued in book form. These caused an extraordinary sensation, proving as they did that Conan Doyle was capable of using Holmesian deductive methods in real life.

Conan Doyle began to receive poison-pen letters himself; the writing in these was matched to that of a former sailor. Attempts to obtain retrial for Edalji were unsuccessful. Officialdom stood firm. Conan Doyle never did secure reparation for him, but his efforts excited public feeling and succeeded in informally clearing his name. Following the unsatisfactory report of the Gladstone Commission on the case, national criticism was so widespread that eventually the result was the creation of the Court of Criminal Appeal.

Conan Doyle was convinced that the cattle mutilator was a man named Royden Sharp, a school mate of George Edalji who, Conan Doyle believed, had built up a grudge against him. Sharp's voyages as a sailor coincided with the periods in which the threatening letters did not appear in Great Wyrley, and there were other indications of Sharp's guilt. However, until very recently, this information was not made public. It appeared in a critical study of Conan Doyle's work by Pierre Nordon in 1966, and in a BBC recreation of the Edalji case in the early 1970's.

After his fine work on this case, Conan Doyle was frequently asked to solve puzzles of various kinds. One

case that came his way particularly fascinated him. He always refused to disclose the names of the people concerned; the names are invented in the following account.

Conan Doyle was contacted by a Mrs. Bellew, who said that her favorite cousin, Henry Armstrong, had disappeared. He had left the Langham Hotel in London after attending a musical performance, had been seen entering his room late at night, and had not been seen leaving it. Conan Doyle wrote by return mail:

Dear Mrs. Bellew,

Your cousin is in Scotland. Look for him in Glasgow or Edinburgh, and I will guarantee you will find him.

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

He had deduced the solution in an hour. He determined by telephone that the man had withdrawn his money from a bank. He deduced that the man could not have left the hotel after midnight, because the hall porter locked the door at that time and would have seen anyone who came through it. Why did Armstrong choose to leave at a late hour unobserved, but not after twelve o'clock? Obviously, because he was catching a train. He could not be going to a modestly sized town, where he would easily be recognized. The train for Edinburgh and Glasgow left at midnight. Conan Doyle's deduction proved to be correct, and the man was found.

A much more important event occurred in 1907. In the stories *The Musgrave Ritual*, *The Blue Carbuncle*, and *The Beryl Coronet*, Holmes had been shown solving the thefts of precious objects. Now, Conan Doyle was faced with a remarkably similar problem in real life. For many years, his mother had kept in touch with a second cousin, Sir Arthur Vicars. As Ulster King of Arms, Vicars was in charge not only of the heraldic records maintained in Dublin Castle but also of the valuable Irish crown jewels, consisting of a diamond star, a diamond badge, and five collars studded with precious gems. The jewels had been presented by William IV in 1830 to the Order of St. Patrick, to be worn on state occasions by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland as Grand Master of the Order. Vicars' predecessor, Sir Bernard Burke, had supplied the Ma'am with details of her family heraldry, and has passed on many of her requests for information to Vicars.

The combined worth of the Irish crown jewels was £100,000, the equivalent of over £500,000 today. Early in July, Conan Doyle was astounded to read in the paper that the jewels had been stolen from under the noses of Vicars and his nephew and assistant, known as the "Cork Herald," Peirce Mahony. They had been taken from a safe housed in the Bedford Castle tower, and the only man who had the keys was Vicars himself. Vicars was engulfed in a major scandal. In the first place, it emerged that he had removed the jewels for "inspection" a month earlier, and had failed to lock them up properly when he returned them to the library where they were stored. It was impolitely suggested that actually he had not put them back into the safe, but had put them into a simple iron box, for the feeble reason that the lock of the safe was rusted. It was also pointed out that when the loss of the jewels was discovered, for some reason best known to himself he had not reported the matter to the police immediately.

Seriously embarrassed, Vicars wrote to Conan Doyle seeking advice. Could the robbery be an imitation of the recent theft of the Ascot Gold Cup? Was there a



Arthur Conan Doyle and his wife Louise  
on a tricycle in South Norwood, 1892.  
(THE ADVENTURES OF CONAN  
DOYLE, The Life of the Creator of  
Sherlock Holmes by Charles Higham.  
Published by W. W. Norton)

political motivation? Was the theft the act of Irish rebels?

Conan Doyle sifted through all the available evidence. He discovered that there was a curious little group surrounding Vicars; all of its members bore the pretentious title "Herald," and in some cases they were possibly homosexual. The Dublin Herald—the second in command to Vicars—was Francis Shackleton, brother of the famous explorer Ernest Shackleton, who was at that moment preparing his expedition to the Antarctic and the South Pole in the *Nimrod*. Conan Doyle had met Francis Shackleton in South Africa and had heard about his gambling debts, his bisexual relationships, and his outrageous behavior in public. By a process of deduction, Conan Doyle concluded that Francis Shackleton had had access to the keys and could have made an impression of them. Since Shackleton was already known as a criminal, the conclusion was obvious. Conan Doyle also felt that Shackleton must have had an accomplice, and he decided that this would have to be Pierce Mahony.

While Conan Doyle was unraveling the details, a peculiar event took place in Ireland. Francis Shackleton returned to Dublin, ostensibly to help in the recovery of



the jewels. Apparently a spiritualist, he arranged a seance at Sir Arthur Vicars' handsome house in Dublin. While a society audience sat enthralled, and police watched skeptically, a medium sank into a deep trance and announced that the crown jewels were to be found in one of two graveyards near Dublin. Vicars, grabbing at any straw, set out with Shackleton on a bizarre expedition to dig up the graveyards. Needless to say, they found nothing and the comments of the Dublin press were, to say the least, unflattering. In England, led by the novelist Marie Corelli, the press had a field day, describing the anxious knight and his flustered helper combing their way through bones, tin cans, and rubbish of all kinds, scrabbling on all fours in the rain.

Edward VII did not find the spectacle amusing, dismissed Vicars, and allowed the odd little group of Heralds to resign. Conan Doyle's investigations continued. The police also were on the trail. Then, without warning, the entire matter was dropped.

It had been found that Shackleton, who had lived on terms of suspicious intimacy with Vicars in London, was also very close to the Duke of Argyll, the King's

brother-in-law, and that Shackleton was involved in a homosexual ring in Dublin and London. Evidently, Edward VII was afraid that if Shackleton were arrested, he would disclose under cross-examination that homosexuality was to be found extremely close to the Throne. The consequences of this revelation would, of course, be especially serious. Vicars was ruined, and Francis Shackleton died destitute in 1925, destroyed by gambling and blackmailers. In 1914, Pierce Mahony died mysteriously. He was supposed to have been shooting birds on a lake. Apparently, as he climbed over a wire fence, he accidentally tripped the trigger of his gun, and was shot dead. Many people believed that he had been killed because he knew too much about the crown-jewel robbery, and his demise had been expertly arranged to look like an accident. In 1921, Vicars was called from his house and shot down. He probably knew too much. The jewels have not been recovered to this day.

If this was a case of art imitated by life, then, as so often before, Conan Doyle again turned life into art. He thinly veiled the entire episode in his Holmes story *The Bruce-Partington Plans*. Sir Arthur Vicars becomes Sir James Walter, keeper of official papers in London. Francis Shackleton becomes his brother, Colonel Valentine Walter, his first name an extremely subtle reference to the gossip that Shackleton was Vicars' lover. A man named Cadogan West is found dead, his murder made to look like an accident. Quite obviously, he is modeled on the unfortunate Pierce Mahony.

The theme of *The Bruce-Partington Plans* is the theft not of jewels, but of submarine plans, a theft which may lead to war with a foreign power. It is quite extraordinary that Conan Doyle should have brought up this subject so early. True, since the passage of the first German Navy Law in March, 1898, the expansion of the Kaiser's navy under Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz had caused some concern at the highest level in Britain. True, also, the Pact of Cartagena of May 16, 1907, between Britain, France, and Spain, designed to maintain the *status quo* between the Mediterranean and the east Atlantic powers, had emphasized the need for a British naval force equivalent to Germany's. But submarine warfare, though occasionally discussed, was not seriously considered at the time. One can only speculate on Conan Doyle's source of information. Since presumably he was not, for all his talents, gifted with second sight, it must be deduced that his friendship with Edward VII, and with the new Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, gave him access to privileged material which he slipped into his stories in disguised form. The subject of submarines was to come up again at the outset of World War I, when he was accused of inadvertently supplying the Germans with the idea of a submarine blockade in his story *Danger!*

On September 18, 1907, Conan Doyle married Jean Leckie. The entire Doyle family wholeheartedly approved the match. Conan Doyle dreaded crowds, brass bands, and fuss, and he refused to tell the press where the ceremony would be held. But of course, the location was discovered immediately—St. Margaret's, Westminster, right next to the stately gray pile of Westminster Abbey. Arthur and Innes, who was best man, arrived in a hansom; all of his sisters came, except Lottie, who was in India; and Dodo's husband, the Reverend Cyril Angell, officiated. Kingsley, a well-knit, handsome blond boy of fifteen, and Mary, a sweet and attractive girl of eighteen, were there, and welcomed their new

Conan Doyle and Houdini in Atlantic City, 1922. (THE ADVENTURES OF CONAN DOYLE, *The Life of the Creator of Sherlock Holmes* by Charles Higham—W. W. Norton)



stepmother warmly. Conan Doyle, in black frock coat, white chamois waistcoat, striped trousers, and spats, looked uncomfortable; Jean, in white silk appliqued with handsome white Irish lace, was exquisite, but extremely nervous. After the ceremony, the guests went by carriage to the Hotel Metropole. Jean was so badly hampered by the long train of her gown that Arthur swept her off her feet and carried her, in one long powerful movement, all the way up the red-carpeted stairs to the Grand Reception Room. Among the well-wishers present to enjoy the champagne, caviar, and smoked salmon were Jerome K. Jerome, Bram Stoker, now famous as the author of *Dracula*, George Newnes, Greenhough Smith, John and Archie Langman, and George Edalji.

The honeymoon trip was leisurely; they cruised in the Mediterranean, visiting the Greek islands, Egypt, and Turkey. In Egypt, Conan Doyle was disappointed to find that no one was left on his old hunting ground. Sir Eldon Gorst, who had just taken over from Baron Cromer as Egyptian consul general, was most gracious to the Conan Doyles, but he was distracted by his new responsibilities and could not give the honeymoon couple much attention. In Sophia, they were given permission to attend the sacred festival of the Night of Power. Conan Doyle wrote: "It was the most marvelous spectacle as from the upper circle of pillared arches we looked down upon 60,000 lighted lamps and 12,000 worshippers, who made, as they rose and fell in their devotions, a sound like the wash of the sea." A young woman in the party perched on the parapet and waved at the twelve thousand men below. No woman was permitted to behave in this fashion, and a sea of faces, livid with anger, turned up toward the group. Conan Doyle wrote: "I heard a low deep growl . . . it only need one fiery spirit to head the rush and we should have been massacred—with the poor consolation that some of us had really asked for it. However, she was pulled down, and we made our way as quickly and as quietly as possible out of the side door. It was time, I think."

In early November, in Constantinople, Sultan Abdul-Hamid arranged for Conan Doyle to receive the Order of the second class of the Medjideh, and Jean was awarded the second class of the Niehan-i-Chafahat. The Sultan revealed through his Chamberlain that like other crowned heads of Europe, he was completely captivated by the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Back in England in December to spend Christmas with the children, the Conan Doyles looked extremely fit and happy. The easygoing Mediterranean cruise, the quiet strolls through different ports, had added to the intense pleasure of personal fulfillment after a decade of self-denial. On their return, Conan Doyle made arrangements to lease Undershaw, so that they could buy a house where they would be near Jean's family. He settled on Windlesham, a handsome estate only minutes from the house at Crowborough in which her parents and her delightful brother Malcolm were living after moving from Glebe House, Blackheath.

Conan Doyle was so badly cheated in the deal for the house that it became known, from that moment on, as Swindleshaw. It was situated near an extremely quiet, tree-shaded country road. The road ran south of the house, which was sheltered by a tall privet hedge; rolling lawns ran up to the front door. Near the entrance stood a small gardener's cottage. To the west of the house lay a rather overgrown garden, which Jean soon converted into a series of rose bowers, with canopied

shadowy walks which she loved to stroll through on warm afternoons.

It was a much more imposing residence than Undershaw. Guests arriving at the front door were greeted by a page like Billy in the Gillette play, in brass buttons and a cap, who ushered them into the hall. A tremendous flight of stairs swept up to the first-floor landing. To the right, under the shadow of the stairs, was the study-office of Conan Doyle's secretary, Major Wood; farther along, beyond a special door, lay the completely separate servants' quarters. The dining room was at the back of the house, with windows looking over the garden; and beyond it again was an immense billiard room, stretching the entire width of the house. At the northern end was a nursery, which was later used as a seance room.

The hall stairs led to Conan Doyle's study, at their left. This room, handsomely appointed, occupied the southwest corner of the upper story, for the length of two of the four gables. Walking northward along the corridor, the visitor could see a small guest room, then Jean's room, above the western end of the billiard room. It was the most beautiful part of the house, and from it Jean could look out on the rose bowers of her exquisite garden. A connecting door led into Conan Doyle's bedroom.

A mud-encrusted cricket bat hung in the place of honor in the hall, commemorating Conan Doyle's first century on a wet wicket at Lord's. The drawing room offered a handsome statuette of Lord Roberts, a gift from the members of the Langman Hospital in recognition of his sterling work at Bloemfontein. In his bedroom was a silver bowl given to him as a farewell present by his neighbors and their gardeners and grooms at Hindhead. The hall offered a haversack containing a chessboard and chessmen he had found near Capetown, and a blood-encrusted bandoleer taken from a dead man near Pretoria. There were sporting trophies everywhere, including a magnificent stag's head, and photographs of celebrated boxers. In a study window stood a bust of Sherlock Holmes, with an air gun ironically laid beside it.

The house, which Conan Doyle was to retain until his death, was infused with his personality; spacious, warm, glowing with good cheer, it was an Englishman's castle to the last brick. He was very happy there.

It was in this period that Conan Doyle became fascinated by a new subject: the extraordinary case of "Eva C." He had read reports about her by Dr. Charles Richet, Professor of Physiology at the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Paris and honorary President of La Societe Universelle d'Etudes Psychiques. In April, 1906, Richet published, in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, details of some extraordinary occurrences at the Villa Carmen in Algiers, a rambling white building, owned by a General Noel of the French Resident Army. These had begun in the 1890's. Almost every night during the decade, the General and Mme Noel held seances, presided over by their medium, Ahmed, an elderly Arab servant who appeared to have a flair for evoking psychic manifestations. It was said that at his behest the spirits on one occasion carried a stone weighing seventy kilograms from the garden into the house, and on another changed tea in a cup to coffee.

Ahmed claimed to be in touch with a spirit known as Bien-Boa, a Brahmin Hindu who announced that he had died exactly three hundred years before and had been appointed, he did not say by whom, as a ghostly guide



*The real Sherlock Holmes: Dr. Joseph Bell of Edinburgh University. (THE ADVENTURES OF CONAN DOYLE, *The Life of the Creator of Sherlock Holmes* by Charles Higham. Published by W. W. Norton)*

to the Noels. He caused table movements, spirit writing on papers and slates, and a pretty exhibition of whirling colored lights in the darkness of the villa.

In 1899, "Eva C" or "Eva Carriere," entered the picture. Her real name was Marthe Beraud. Dark-haired and rather plain, she still had a considerable power to attract, and many people who attended seances she conducted mentioned her magnetic force. Her family—she was the daughter of a French army officer under General Noel's command—had sworn her to secrecy about her identity in 1897. The first we hear of her is that she became engaged to Noel's son Maurice in August, 1899.

In July 1900, Maurice went to the French Congo as a commercial agent. He died of a tropical disease in 1904. By now, Ahmed had been fired, since he had been caught by a visitor peeping out from behind a curtain, with a luminous mask. He was replaced by another medium, known as Ninon. Bien-Boa appeared again, helmeted and heavily bearded, at Ninon's seances. He was accompanied by his sister, Bergolia, who announced in a silvery voice that she and her brother had been dear friends of Mme Noel's in a previous incarnation. Mme Noel wrote to her legal adviser, an Algerian lawyer named Marsault, that Bergolia drank tea with her, "talking in the most feminine way imaginable, while rummaging about in a box of sweets."

Most marvelous of all, Mme Noel saw her son Maurice. He embraced her, and when he withdrew into the cabinet she could still feel on her forehead the icy imprint of his reading glasses. But soon after, Mme Noel received a disagreeable shock. Eva C. caught Ninon in a wig, spectacles, and mask which exactly duplicated the appearance of Maurice Noel. "Ninon had better not impersonate my fiance to me, or I'll jump in his face!" she told her horrified hostess.

After that, Ninon disappeared discreetly, and Eva C. took over as the only medium at the Villa Carmen. A cabinet was built to her specifications, and the room used for seances was lit only by subdued red light. She would retire to the cabinet. A few minutes after, as the curtain swung into place a figure dressed in white would emerge and drift through the audience. This was Bergolia. Often she would be joined by Bien-Boa, and Maurice Noel would materialize, his spectacles shining faintly in the glowing red light of the lamp. Mme Noel published a detailed account of these seances in the French spiritualist magazine *Revue Scientifique et Morale de Spiritisme*.

Understandably intrigued, Professor Richet arrived at the Villa Carmen in 1904, and remained as a house guest for two years. The seances held for Richet took place in a specially prepared room over the stables. The black maid, Aischa, sat next to Eva C. in the cabinet. Sometimes Eva C. would cry out from the cabinet that in the burning heat of the North African summer, she could not endure the odor of the Negress; after that, an understandably grieved Aischa would rush out of the cabinet and disappear down the corridor, wringing her hands. After a two-hour wait, Bien-Boa would finally emerge from the cabinet. Richet swore that Eva C. and Bien-Boa were not one and the same. An intruding neighbor gossiped that he had seen Areski, the Arab coachman, dressed up in a mask and false beard. Shortly after, an Algerian physician, Dr. Rouby, exhibited Areaki in his impersonation of Bien-Boa to the local theater.

Richet brought a flask of baryta water to one seance,

to see if the phantom would exhale carbon dioxide. It did. Bien-Boa blew so vigorously into the tube that bubbles were seen. Richet became suspicious after this: surely Bien-Boa must be human? At another seance, ectoplasm made an appearance. Richet saw a white vapor, like a small scarf or handkerchief, rise up and form itself into a little man, dressed in a turban and white mantle, who moved with a slight limp from right to left in front of the curtain. Then the head rose from the shoulders and executed a circle in mid-air. Richet had his suspicions. The beard and mustache of the little figure looked artificial, and between the curtain and Eva C.'s black skirt were two small white rods which could have held a simulacrum of a head and shoulders. He noted also that Eva C.'s left sleeve was empty; was she an expert in glove puppetry? As Richet prepared to leave Algiers, Bien-Boa said to him, "Stay! You will see her whom you desire!"

"It will be easily understood," Richet added, "that I stayed."

The next day, there appeared in the cabinet the face of a lovely young girl, with a gold crown and pearly teeth. General Noel said to Richet, "Put your hand behind the curtain and you can touch her hair." Richet, quite carried away, obeyed, but withdrew his hand immediately. "It's more like horsehair," he said with disgust.

The young girl's hand tapped him reprovingly. "Bring scissors tomorrow," she said. Richet complied. The girl emerged and announced that she was Cleopatra. "Did you bring the scissors?" she asked. Richet nodded and grabbed a large chunk of hair. As he cut it, a hand emerged and slapped his down. "That's quite enough," he said.

The hair was very fine and silky, and turned out to be genuine. Ruling out a wig, on the peculiar basis that the Noels couldn't afford one, he returned to Paris excitedly to publish his immense study of Eva C. in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* in April 1906. Meanwhile, the lawyer, Marsault, and the physician, Dr. Rouby, issued a report in the Paris magazine *Les Nouveaux Horizons* which threatened to ruin both Richet and Eva C. Marsault disclosing that Eva C. had told him both Bergolia and Bien-Boa were pure humbug. He also revealed that Eva C. and her black servant liked to dress up as men in masks and beards. Eva C. said she had become a medium to satisfy Mme Noel who was fascinated by spirits. When she heard Richet was coming, she arranged further disguises and the installation of a series of trap doors.

The bizarre events at the Villa Carmen intrigued Conan Doyle enormously. Convinced that Marsault was disaffected, he ignored the lawyer's report, and wrote to Richet telling him that he was dazzled by his discoveries in Algiers. The whole episode appealed to him on a deeply romantic level; his love of the bizarre completely overruled his sense of logic, and he desperately wanted to know more. It turned out that Eva C. had now come to Paris, at the invitation of the dramatist and socialite Alexandre Bisson, author of the melodrama *Madame X*, whose wife was a fashionable sculptress.

Richet wrote to Conan Doyle describing Eva C.'s new series of seances. Mme Bisson frequently spent the seances in the cabinet with Eva C., a highly suspicious fact which a few were rude enough to refer to. Bien-Boa and Bergolia had presumably been left behind in Algiers, since they did not materialize in Paris. Eva C. produced

ectoplasm, vague shapes of arms, hands, and fingers, and finally a fully materialized female head. Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, a leading psychic investigator, arrived from Munich to examine Eva C. and her phenomena and record them by camera. Conan Doyle was astounded by the photographs which arrived from Paris. He wrote, "Isn't this, without a doubt, the most fantastic thing the mind can conceive? Before such results the brain, even of the trained psychical student, is dazed. While that of the orthodox man of science, who has given no heed to these developments, is absolutely helpless." he evidently overlooked the possibility that the various shapes might have been modeled in soft material by Mme Bisson, who was, after all, a practiced sculptress, and that Eva C. might have regurgitated certain substances.

In the world of the rational, Conan Doyle was as busy as ever. He wrote a series of tales set in ancient times, which were published in 1911 as *The Last Galley*. The title story, thinly disguised as an account of a Roman naval onslaught on an impotent Carthage, was an early critique of Britain's naval unpreparedness in time of possible war. On the face of it, the warning seemed inappropriate, since Britain was then following a program of building dreadnaughts. Presumably, Conan Doyle was again referring indirectly to the danger of foreign submarines, and perhaps to the notorious weakness of the plating below the water line on British vessels.

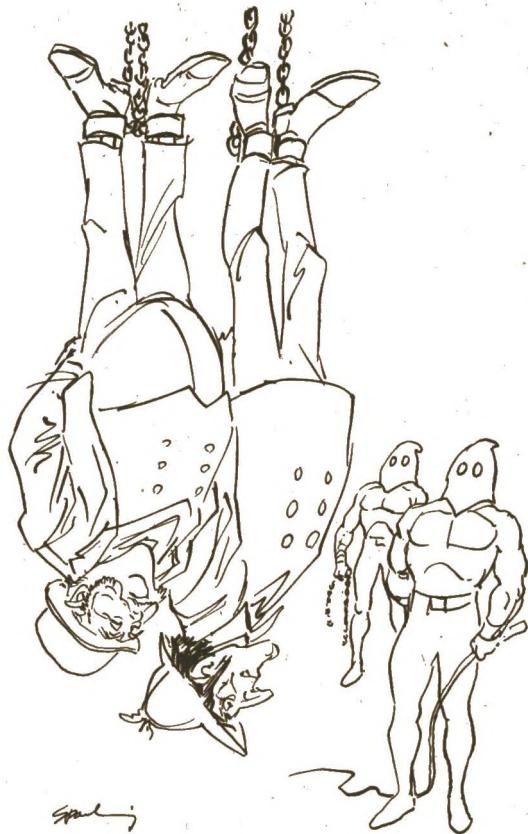
During the writing of this series of tales, his health again began to fail. In January 1909, his recurring intestinal problems became so serious that he was bedridden. He appears to have had an intestinal blockage, which called for an operation on January 11. Daily bulletins in the London *Times* indicate that he was in very serious condition, and for three days was on the danger list. Evidently the memory of this close brush with death was deeply painful, for he did not mention it in the memoirs he published in the 1920's. Because of his pressing commitments, he was unable to take a convalescent vacation until September, when he and Jean cruised to Lisbon and the Mediterranean.

Despite his illness, Conan Doyle managed to try his hand at a new form—an original play. His earlier ventures into drama—his stage adaptation *Halves*, and *Brigadier Gerard* for the handsome matinee idol Lewis Waller—had been only minor successes. Now he began a new series of vehicles for Waller, all of which he scrapped. He finally settled on writing a play based on *The Tragedy of the "Korosko."* Called *The Fires of Fate*, "A Morality Play in Four Acts," it starred Waller as a gallant colonel who, given a short time to live by a London doctor, travels to Egypt and becomes the shepherd of a flock of river-boat tourists.

Determined to allow nothing to interfere with the production of this work, Conan Doyle took a lease on the Lyric Theatre and financed the undertaking himself. He scrupulously oversaw every detail of the sets and costumes, driving both designers and costumiers almost mad with his insistence on authenticity. He was recreating his experience in Egypt, and his memory was perfect. He even insisted that when the dervishes captured the little party of tourists, they should beat them with real cudgels and whips. The unfortunate cast was black and blue by opening night, and as noted by more than one keen-eyed spectator, they hobbled onto the

(Continued on page 72)

## DOYLOGUES



"There is nothing more stimulating than a case where everything goes against you."



"Come, Watson, come! The game is afoot!"

JHW

December 12, 1927

William Claymore, Esq  
Hendley and Claymore,  
141 Bond Street  
London

Dear Willie:

As my solicitor and good friend, you are the logical repository of a group of manuscripts that I have recently completed. These, which I have forwarded under separate wrapper, are my final recollections of adventures shared with Sherlock Holmes.

If you are of the opinion, as Holmes was himself, at times, that there have been enough of these chronicles, rest assured that these are more than a bit different.

Each of these chapters of Holmesian history concerns a subject or certain personal details which the moral climate of Victorian England prohibited from public print. And, to be fair, much of this came about through my own rather stern view of life.

The approach of my final chapter on Earth, however, has served to remove much of the starch from that view. You too may one day find that, when most of your concern is riveted upon failing heart, liver and lungs, you no longer give a damn about what the world thinks of you.

Should you, however, think that I am suddenly reborn a libertarian, let these final instructions advise you otherwise.

Under no circumstances are these manuscripts to be released less than 50 years from the day of my death. Toward that end, I have instructed the authorities here to advise you upon my demise.

If I do not see you before then, perhaps I shall thereafter.

Your obedient servant,

*Jack*

John H. Watson, M.D.  
Royal Military Home  
Edinburgh, Scotland

P.S. In your case, as I have advised you in the past, it is definitely the liver to watch our for.

*Received Dec. 26, 1927 W.C.*

New Holmes Mystery:

# The Adventures Of The Mad Midwife



Though I have forgotten that precise date, still I can recall distinctly what occupied my mind at the very moment Mrs. Hudson knocked on our door. For I had thought of little else all that cloudless morning in August 1885. I was engaged with the memory of a copper-haired waitress who set *that* luncheon for young Stamford and myself at the Holborne Restaurant.<sup>1</sup>

An enchanting East End beauty, she addressed us in monosyllables to avoid the embarrassment of her clanging cockney speech. The incongruity of that whining distortion of proper English issuing from that adorable face is a memory that glows within me as though it were yesterday. But I am 76 years old, and the fateful luncheon that led to my introduction to Sherlock Holmes is 46 years down the halls of history.

The vision of that lovely daughter of the labouring class had been called up by a cockney monologue Holmes had delivered over breakfast. Larking about in a cap festooned with mother-of-pearl buttons freshly rummaged from the cupboards that held his many costumes and artifacts of disguise, he threw me a crooked smile and bleated:

"You wouldn't 'ave 'alf-a'quid for a poor gagger what's been Tobyin' the paves of Ol' Smoke ever since the flatties punched out me 'ey-diddle-diddle, wou'ja?"

This he later translated for me as, "You wouldn't have ten shillings for a poor street musician who has been tramping the streets of London ever since some constable smashed my violin, would you?"

That was where my mind had gone awandering when her usual, single, stern knock announced Mrs. Hudson. She entered our rooms carrying a brass salver that held two visitors' cards.

"Two persons to see you, Mr. Holmes," she said.

Holmes lifted the beloved Stradivarius from his lap where, in that unorthodox position, he had been coaxing forth a Mozart variation of his own devising.

"Two gentlemen, two ladies, or one of each, my good woman?"

"One gentleman of the cloth and one . . . newspaper person," she sniffed, proferring the two visitors' cards.

Holmes read aloud from the first. "Bramwell Booth, Captain . . ."

"An army man? I thought she said he was a preacher," I interrupted.

"Captain," Holmes continued, "Salvation Army." He closed his eyes and I could almost hear the rolling drawers of his mind swiftly sliding open and shut in search of the information stored in that extraordinary data repository.

"Bramwell Booth, son of William Booth, General and founder of the Salvation Army some seven years ago. It was William who, as a Wesleyan minister, first drew the wrath of his fellow Methodists when he led a crowd of workingmen from a local pub through the main door of his church. For, as all 'good Christians' know, the poor must properly enter through the side door." He gave a sardonic grunt and continued.

"Bramwell's mother, Catherine, is, to my knowledge, the first woman preacher in all of England. In fact, the women members of the 'Army', dubbed by some Newcastle handbill printer as the 'Hallelujah Lasses', have brought enormous attention and success to its crusades."

"I find most clergymen a bit stuffy," I said.

"Not Bramwell, I will vow. Were you aware that he often arrives at his public meetings in a coffin from which he arises at the dramatic moment to cry out, 'Death, where is thy sting?'"

"Not too stuffy," I said, emitting a chuckle.

"The newspaper person," Holmes said, first reading and then sniffing at the second visitors' card, "is William Thomas Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who," he sniffed at the card again, "smokes a combination of latakia and perique with the faintest touch of rum flavouring. Dominican rum, mind you. Not Jamaican."

Extraordinary? Not for the man who had written a monograph on tobaccos, identifying and analyzing some 140 different varieties.

"Send them up at once, Mrs. Hudson," he said, scratching at a plaster that covered a small wound on his left wrist. I had grown used to those minor acid burns and self-punctures and scrapes of experimentation. What had he said about such a plaster-covered wound that first day? "Have to be careful. I dabble in poisons a good deal."

"I can't say I care too much for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Especially of late," I said.

"Then it is Stead's work you dislike, since he has been chief editor less than two years."

"He's filled it full of pictures, like one of those weekly rags. And all these personal interviews and overly-dramatic headlines. It's not a proper paper. I hardly look at it anymore."

"The wages of free education, Watson! More people than ever are now able to read. But not to read much." It was my turn to grunt at his wry humor. He threw himself into his favorite chair. "But you, dear fellow, speak of style, whereas I am interested in the *Gazette's* contents. Stead has turned it into a fighting cock. Too pugnacious? Perhaps. But it is scrapping for the 'common man'." He spoke that last phrase with the opposing elements of respect and disdain that I had heard him use before.

"Good of you to see us without an appointment," William Stead said, as he led the way through our door. He was of average height with hair, mustache and beard boasting the same flaming colour and precise cut that George Bernard Shaw would make famous in another ten years. (I was later to learn that Stead had been the first prominent editor to print Shaw's book reviews.)

The man in the Salvation Army uniform followed close behind. "We are aware that London's leading private investigator must be a miser of his own time," Bramwell Booth rumbled. He was taller than Holmes, perhaps six-foot-three, with a beard that hung to his chest. A man who wears such a beard is either a fool or a fighter. And, though his dark eyes twinkled like moist raisins in a rice pudding, there seemed nothing foolish about him.

"A consulting detective," Holmes corrected. "Most of my work is in the assistance of private and, at times police investigators who find themselves up one tree or another." He reached for the Persian slipper in the toe of which he kept his private tobacco blend.

"A bit of fuel for your pipe, Mr. Stead? I'm afraid you'll find that it bites more than Midshipman's Friend."

"No thank you, I hardly smo . . . And his mouth froze in an open position, like a fish that knows it has been hooked. "But how did you know my brand?"

"Apparently you carry your visitors cards and your pouch in the same pocket. A faint cloud of Midshipman's Friend still hung over it when Mrs. Hudson conveyed your card to me."

Stead's face cracked wide with a grin. "Did I not tell you he was the man for it, Bramwell?"

Bramwell sank to his knees and gave thanks to "The one on high" for having led them to Holmes. Then he fairly leapt to his feet, slapped Holmes on the back and shouted, "Smashing! Blimey, you are the one!"

Holmes, never too fond of such physical contact, decided to ignore it. "It is clear to me why your missionary work has taken you to the East End, where your 'bless me' has turned to 'blimey'. But what mission could have brought you to the Sherwood Club, London's most expensive golf course?"

It was Bramwell's turn to play hooked fish. Before he could ask the obvious question, Holmes took up his jackknife from the mantle, where it always pierced the morning's mail, knelt rapidly and scraped some dry mud from Bramwell's boot. Bits of grass and clover were mixed in with the mud.

"Oh, come now," Stead said, nodding at the caked earth, "he might as easily have picked that up in his rose garden."

"No! No! It's true," Booth gasped. "One of the Army's greatest benefactors is a Sherwoodian. I was on their links with him this morning to persuade a large con-

tribution. But however did you guess?"

"Guess?" Holmes snorted. But he waved off the insult. "You may recall the *Sherwood Grass Party* of some twenty or more years back." He did not wait to see if any of us did recall it. Needless to suppose, no one did.

"The Sherwood Club faced a crisis in the form of a land-drainage problem. The only solution involved a great civil engineering undertaking. A matter of moving an entire hill. Then a member of their board recommended the strategic planting of a grass said to have extraordinary absorption and retention factors. The plant was found in the Argentine and was called . . . He tapped one finger against his nose in deep thought. Or perhaps mild dramaturgy. He excelled in both. . . .ah, yes! A long-bladed, yellow-edged grass called, *Gold-Rimmed Sanchez*.

"Unfortunately, authorities for The Crown seized the exotic seed shipment at the docks and sealed them in a warehouse as a possible threat to native agriculture. Several nights later, the entire Sherwood Club board—I believe the youngest member was 53—broke into the warehouse dressed as Red Indians and liberated the seed shipment. The resulting jibes at Her Majesty's government caused the Attorney General to drop the entire matter." All the while he talked, he pulverized that cake mud with thumb-pestle and palm-mortar.

"The grass did its job and, to this day, the Sherwood Club is the only spot in England," he said, extracting a long, yellow-edged blade of grass from the crushed earth, "where you will find the *Gold-Rimmed Sanchez*."

An almost cooing sound exited from Bramwell Booth's gaping mouth. "Your powers are extraordinary, sir." He had been staring at Holmes with glazed eyes. Now he ground them tightly shut as though to break the spell. "But ours is rather a long story." He opened his eyes again. "And I hardly know where to begin."

"Then may I suggest you begin at the end. I may then learn whether the beginning is worth my hearing."

Booth nodded and cleared his throat. "In the past five days, two women have been brutally murdered. Women of a certain . . . profession."

"*Belles des Nuit*," Holmes said. He enjoyed seasoning his conversation with foreign phrases and axioms as a good cook pinches out his majoram and thyme. Now his eyes folded in upon themselves once more as he sought more information from within. "Peggy Ludden and Dora Stoddard, found horribly slashed to death in the East End district. The surgical precision of their cutting and the fact that both were attacked in their lower regions caused someone at Scotland Yard—Gregson, no doubt—to dub it the work of a *Mad Midwife*."

"Yes," Stead nodded, eyes ashine. "It was Gregson."

"Naturally. Lestrade is devoid of that grim humour. And I notice that the *Pall Mall Gazette* made effective use of Gregson's gory phrase," Holmes said with a hint of cool disapproval.

"I plead guilty to exploiting charged language," Stead said. "But if even so tawdry a tactic must be used to rouse our sleeping population to these vile crimes, then . . . impropriety be damned!"

"Normally," interposed Booth, "neither people nor police care a ha'penny for the fate of such women. Once in the clutches of the white slavers, they might as well be dead."

Holmes scraped thoughtfully at the plaster on his wrist. "May I ask your precise interest in these murders, Captain Booth?"

Bramwell Booth began to pace the room with those

long legs of his. "Since our inception, the Salvation Army has campaigned against prostitution. Not against the women, mind you. For they are often more sinned against than sinning. Bought or stolen from their impoverished homes when still nearly children, most of them have never known a bright day since. Now then, some two months ago, together with Josephine Butler, that great championess of women's rights, we forged a coalition of some twenty ladies' organizations and gained the dynamic support of Mr. Stead and the *Gazette*."

"It was my intention," Stead took up the thread, "to amass enough inside information to expose the whole, slimy mess." With his fingers he ticked off the ingredients of the mess. "Mary Jeffries and her Church Street 'gay' houses catering to the nobility. The sophisticated West End brothels that specialize in 'Venus circuses', virgin defloweration, whips and chains, homosexuality. And the vice rings that export our virgins—buying mere children from their impoverished parents and shipping them to Belgium and France for the filthy uses of wealthy foreigners."

"A Frenchman in France is hardly a foreigner," I demurred.

"True," Stead agreed. "And one of our girls in a Paris brothel is still a daughter of England!"

"Can I assume that you were unable to gain the cooperation of people within this shadowy industry?" Holmes asked, lighting his pipe with a sputtering vesta.

"Quite the case," Stead said glumly. Then a smile broke through. "But Bramwell and the Army saved the day."

"We do more than thump our drums," you know," Booth said. Suddenly his eyes were on fire and his voice rose to a public-meeting roar. "I have stood at the doors of Hell with Josephine Butler, using only our cries of holy inspiration to crumble these walls, even as Joshua used his trumpet." Then, in better control, he continued. "More than a few fallen women have responded to our call. From among these, we supplied Mr. Stead with one—Rebecca Jarrett."

"Rebecca was precisely what I needed," Stead said. "Not just one of the doxies. A woman who had run her own gay house."

"Your purpose?" Holmes asked.

"To simulate the entire *Belgium Transit*, right from the purchase of a 13 year old virgin—yes, an actual buy with the mother fully believing the child was tooting-off-to-whoredom on the 5:19."

"Belgium Transit?" Holmes asked.

"These vice rings that buy young British girls and transport them to Belgium," I said. "It was all detailed in Stead's series last month, didn't you read it?"

"Yes, I did," Holmes said with a dry sound resembling a chuckle, "but I understood that you never even looked at the *Pall Mall Gazette* anymore, Watson." He had very cosily led me up that garden path.

"Our final purpose," Bramwell Booth interjected, "was to make every one of our countrymen aware that we live in a land where it is perfectly legal to use a girl for sexual purposes provided that she is thirteen years old or more!"

"And so," Stead continued, "Rebecca Jarrett arranged for the purchase of a thirteen year old girl and brought her to me. I was disguised during the entire period of my investigations as a ponce—or, as our American cousins say, a pimp. My assistant, an older man named Sampson Jaques, wore the same questionable attire. The first night, we deliberately housed the girl in a 'hotel'

specializing in vice. The management never once questioned the presence of the girl in a single room with two such unsavory characters as we."

"Was this the girl you called 'Lily' in your series of articles?" Holmes asked.

"Yes. However, the child's true name is Eliza Armstrong."

Holmes frowned. "Nowhere in your articles did you disclose that the purchase of 'Lily' was done by you and that it was not a true transportation for immoral purposes."

"True, I did not play completely fair with the reader. But the glorious goal I had in mind I believe fully justified a small trick or two."

"Good for you," I said. "Though I do not appreciate sensational journalism, I know that Parliament would never have finally agreed to raise the age of sexual consent to sixteen, as they did last week, if it had not been for the national stir that your articles created."

"Yes, we have had a great victory," Captain Booth bellowed.

"The protection of our young women has been advanced," Holmes mused, "but the name of journalism has not. If you may falsify a story to smash the vice rings, why may they not do the same to even the score?"

"Good grief, Holmes," I said, "ten minutes ago you were telling me that you liked the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s fighting spirit."

"True, Watson. But I do not like *fixed* fights." He put his pipe aside, folded his arms and turned to Stead. "You have yet to explain your interest in the two murdered harlots."

"Within days after my articles began appearing, other journals sought to cast doubt on them. They raised the same questions as you did about the buying of Eliza Armstrong. I knew that I must bolster my evidence with one strong and direct link to a major vice ring; one active and clever prostitute ready to turn Queen's evidence on the entire organization. Josephine Butler brought me such a one."

"From one of her *Mercy Houses* for 'fallen' women, no doubt," I said.

"No. Though Mrs. Butler's group had twice dedicated all-night prayer sessions for her redemption, the woman had still not left the brothel. Which would prove all the better for me."

"The last biscuit from the oven . . ." Holmes began.

" . . . keeps the most heat," Stead finished. "Precisely. I wanted her red hot and ready to smite the brothel syndicate with information that was up to the very last minute."

"And that woman was . . .?"

"Peggy Ludden," Stead said with a sigh dedicated to that first victim. "There were two meetings. At first, I proposed to pay her five pounds to help her begin her life again. She said she had not made up her mind to leave the house. But that, if she did decide to give evidence—bringing certain distress to many of the girls she still considered her friends—it would not be for five pounds but for the salvation of her own eternal soul."

"Good for her," I cheered.

"The second meeting was at her request. She was under obvious strain, understandably enough. To turn upon the brothel operators was no small matter. But this time she agreed—in return for nine pounds." My disappointment sounded itself aloud.

"I say! The ruddy cheek of the woman! First, all that fine talk about salva . . ."

"Nine pounds, Mr. Stead? You're certain?" Holmes interrupted.

"Of course. I, too, was bemused by the strange figure. Had I been less elated over her change of mind, I would surely have asked her about it."

"A pity you could not have tempered your elation one-question's worth," Holmes reproached him. Stead shrugged. "And how soon after was she found murdered?"

"Within 24 hours," Bramwell Booth responded, eager to rejoin the telling. "The following night the syndicate closed her mouth forever."

"That is conjecture, not fact, Mr. Booth," Holmes said, knocking his pipe against the inside wall of our hearth. "The only irrefutable matter is that the woman was murdered."

"But who else . . ." Booth began.

"Ahhh, yes," Holmes responded. And no more. "What of the second victim? Was she another of Mrs. Butler's converts?"

"No. The fact is that there has never been any connection between our group and the Stoddard woman. She has, of course, been identified as a prostitute, and she was mutilated in the same fashion as Peggy Ludden. That is almost all we know of her."

"Oh, come now," Bramwell argued, "we know full well why they killed her."

"You mean you have made a strong conjecture, Mr. Booth," Holmes cautioned. "And shall I tell you what that is?"

"Well, it is a bit complicated and I would not expect you could possibly . . ."

"You theorize that the brothel syndicate killed Peggy to stop her from talking, later slicing her up in a fashion to simulate the work of a maniac. Then, to cover their tracks even further, poor, totally uninvolved Dora was sacrificed—murdered in the same manner so that the first murder would now be thought the beginning of a series of ritualistic killings. Am I correct as to your hypothesis?"

"Quite," Bramwell whispered.

"You must acknowledge it is a strong skein of logic, Holmes," I said.

"And do I need caution you again, Watson, against developing the 'facts' to fit the logic instead of the other way around?"

"But the brothel operators had a strong motive," Stead pointed out. "And the killing of Peggy Ludden for any other reason poses a terrible case of coincidence."

"Quite. But not all the coincidences of human activities are restricted to Mr. Dickens' novels. Some are found in life, as well." Holmes returned the briar he had been smoking to its place in the pipe rack and selected his favorite bent-stemmed meerschaum. "There are one or two points of interest in this affair. A pity I shall not be able to join you."

"What?" Bramwell Booth gasped.

"It is my policy never to accept a client who is not the direct target or a relative or employer of the victim. The exception, of course, would be if Gregson were to ask for my assistance."

"Which he will not," Bramwell said. "I urged him to and he replied, 'The Yard is perfectly capable of dealing with two sadly-ended prosties without the help of amateurs—even talented amateurs!'"

I cannot recall precisely what I said, but I know it formed a loud, sputtering sound. Holmes merely laughed.

"At least he allowed me that much, Watson—talent. That is, if Gregson really said it." And Holmes eyed

Bramwell slyly.

"Upon my word as an officer in The Army," the bearded giant protested, "I did not invent the phrase to bait you into joining us."

Holmes scowled. "Why, the insufferable pup!"

"But remember," I twitted him, "he found you a superior amateur."

"Nevertheless," Holmes said disregarding me, "were I to begin taking as clients people so tenuously related to the victim, our stairs would send up an endless clacking from the heels of thrill seekers and the morbidly curious."

"I feared as much," Stead said, handing Holmes a small pale blue envelope which he had withdrawn from an inner pocket. "And so I brought you this." I squinted to read the firmly-penned note over Holmes' shoulder.

"Mr. Holmes: I ask that you render all possible service to the two men bearing this communication. Their cause is my cause and, God willing, shall one day be that of all humankind. Cordially, Florence Nightingale."

The word "mankind" had been struck through and replaced with the genderless, "humankind."

Florence Nightingale! The Lady with the Lamp! The Angel of Balaclava!<sup>2</sup> And more important to me as a pensioner who bore knee and shoulder wounds from two jezail bullets, the woman who, single-handed, had forced two Parliamentary investigations and resultant reforms of the horrendous conditions in our military hospitals. If her work for women's rights proved half as successful, the battle was good as won.

"You certainly cannot refuse that signature, Holmes."

"I cannot indeed, Watson. It is one of the few decent names that has attached itself to the barbarism called war."

"Praise be," Bramwell whooped, striding to the window and waving his cap at someone below. There began a great bellowing of trumpet and tuba and Holmes and I were at the window in a shot.

There they stood, a mighty contingent of the Salvation Army, demonstrating at the doorstep of 221B Baker Street. I could make out the hawk-nosed, deep-lined face of William Booth and the saturnine aspect of his wife, Catherine. Though the Army was scarcely seven-years-old, their faces were known to all of London and most of England. The Booths stood in the front rank holding a banner between them: "Peggy and Dora Shall Be Avenged!"

Then a chorus of strident voices reached us through window and drapes:

Come to the peaceful valley  
Come to the joyful glen  
Flee from the cave of mamon  
Fly from the Devil's den

Holmes turned soundlessly away from the bizarre display and gave no sign that his highly musical ears were in pain, though they were.

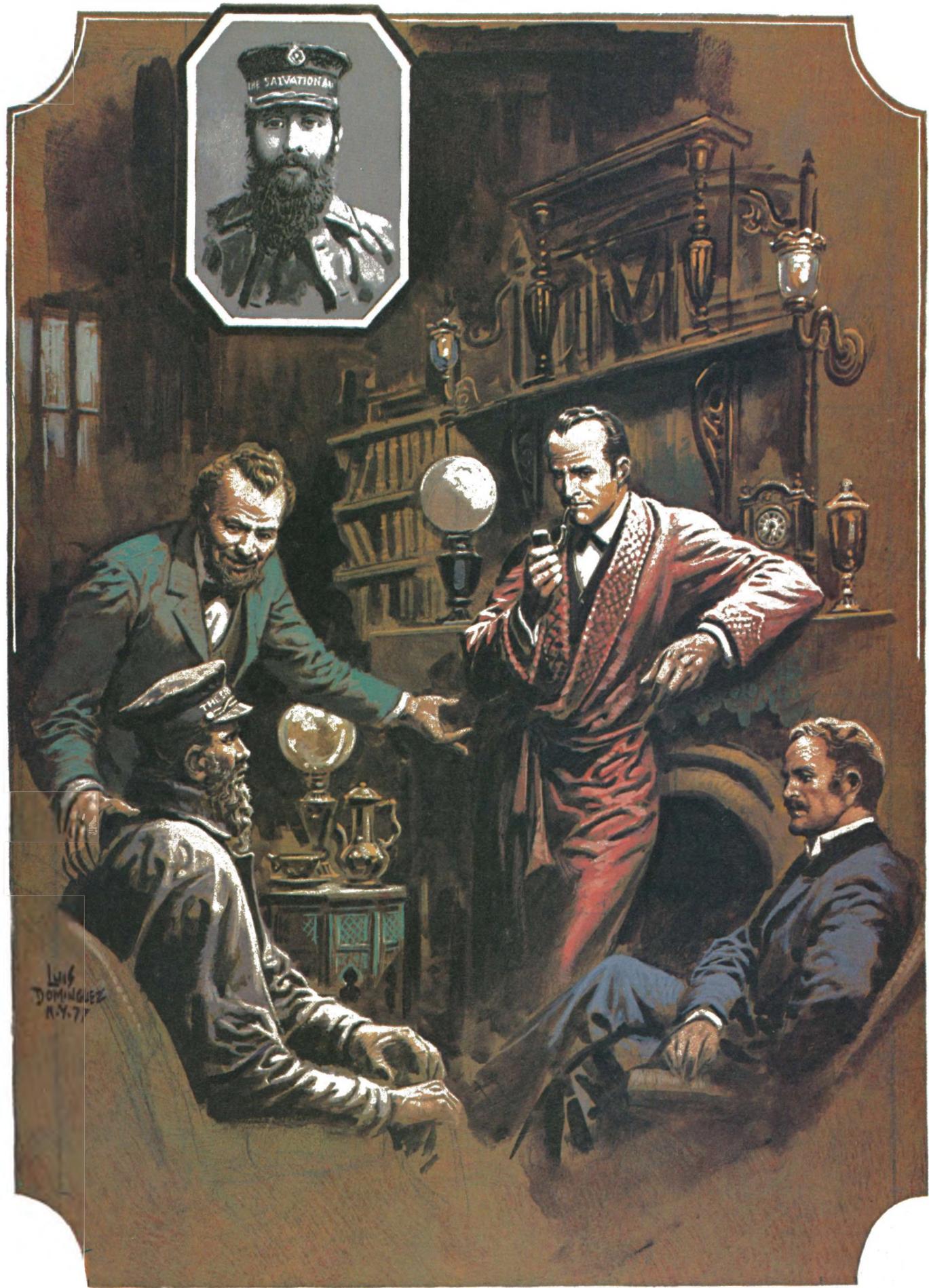
"Where would you like to begin?" Stead asked.

"With the bodies of the victims," Holmes said tartly, "provided that that *untalented* professional, Gregson, has not already destroyed them." Ah, yes. The Inspector had struck a nerve.

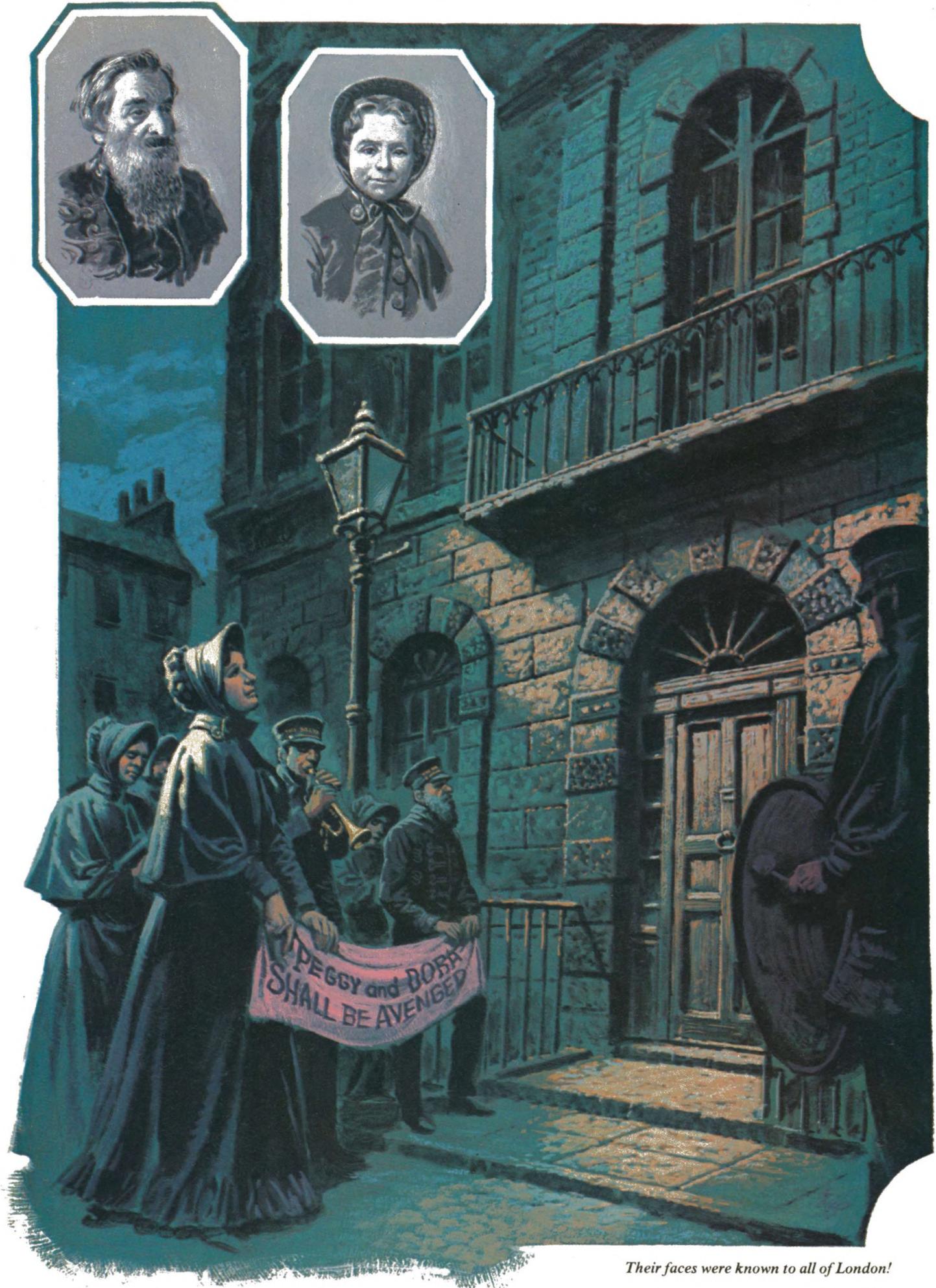
"No. The bodies are in the Cold Room—the basement at St. Bartholemew's Hospital—with one of our people, Sergeant Conroy," Booth said.

St. Bart's! The very spot on which Holmes and I first met. Memory and coincidence were still plotting to make me relive that first day.

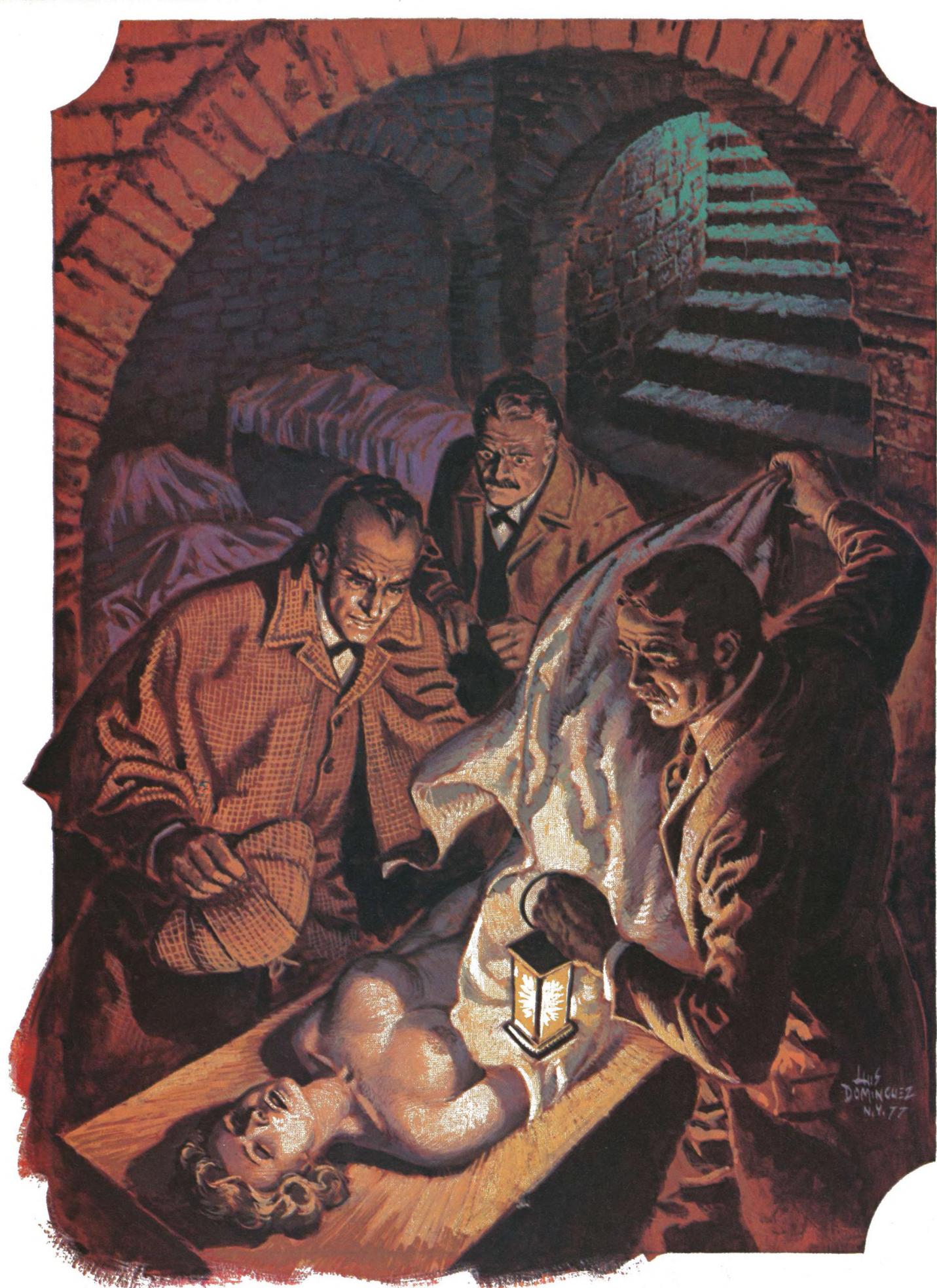
(Continued on page 22)



*"Did I not tell you he was the man for it?"*



*Their faces were known to all of London!*



*He pulled back the sheet to reveal a woman's body.*

# Mad Midwife

(Continued from page 18)

"A police Sergeant? One of your people?" Holmes asked, his eyebrows twin arcs of surprise.

"A former policeman. Of the T-Division. When he repeatedly protested the not-too-secret dealings between the brothel operators and the police—from the lowly constables to the very top men—he was pressured to resign from the force. He is the second to do so, and they have both supplied invaluable information. Bless them," Booth hossanaed.

"A policeman who turns on his own," Holmes said, as he began to remove the lounging coat he wore and headed for his bedroom, "is not a bit more secure than a prostitute who does the same. Perhaps less. I must remember to compliment Sergeant Conroy on his strength of character."

When we left 221B some minutes later, the Salvation Army was still on hand. They gave us a blaring send-off, and I recognized the tune to which they had set new and righteous words.

"Bless my soul, Holmes! That's 'Johnny Whiskey Is My Friend'! I've heard it sung by toppers from Edinburgh to Brighton."

"Of course," he smiled. "But why should the Devil have exclusive rights to all the good tunes?"

Bramwell Booth said his goodbyes and returned to the Army ranks, while Stead joined us in a cab headed east. He had an appointment at Covent Gardens which was along our route to St. Bart's.

On the way, Stead explained that the man awaiting us at St. Bart's, Sergeant Conroy, joined the anti-brother movement some time after Inspector Minahan left T-Division. Of course, most of London knew of the Inspector's troubles. Minahan had submitted to his superiors a complete report on the "partnership" between his fellow officers of T-Division and the vice lords. He received no medals for his efforts. His superiors were offended by the report (which contained the names of countless Lords, bankers and industrialists who regularly visited the joy houses), and they were most incensed by its title, "Brothels for the Nobility." Minahan was forced to withdraw from the police ranks.

Some time later, Sergeant Conroy, as the only man who sided with Minahan, decided that he, too, would join the fight against vice and police corruption. He had proved exceedingly useful to Stead, the Army and the entire movement.

As our cab pulled up to deposit Stead close by his destination, he turned an earnest face to Holmes. "Mind you, sir, I am no vain dreamer of Utopias peopled solely by Sir Galahad and vestal virgins. I have some understanding of the intemperate lusts of men. But if, nightly, we must cast maidens—near children—into the jaws of vice, let us at least see to it that they consent to their own immolation, and are not unwilling sacrifices procured by force or fraud. That is surely not too much to ask of the dissolute rich."

"No vain dreamer indeed," Holmes said, when we were alone in the cab. "In fact, if the emotional stress of that last speech means anything at all, it is that Mr. Stead has a few *intemperate lusts* of his own."

As we once more gazed upon the gloomy face of Old Bart's, the scene of my first meeting there with Mr. Holmes flashed through my head; the high-ceilinged laboratory, the racks of glass tubes and vials, bell jars, retorts, burners. And in the center, like some gaunt Field Marshal commanding his troops, the dark spirit

that was Holmes. What was this incredible conspiracy of memory that seemed dedicated to my total recall of that day?

The basement of St. Bart's is an old Roman foundation (there are still more than a few left in London, you know), a thing of stone floors, walls and arches. It retains a nipping chill on the hottest August day. And, in that time before refrigeration, the Cold Room was the repository of bodies awaiting burial.

Holmes and I carefully made our way down the steep, narrow, dimly-lit steps. Several gas lamps jutting from the walls gave sputtering, eerie light to the windowless vault. As I stared into that unnerving gloom, a figure slowly, soundlessly detached itself from one patch of shadows. I must have been markedly startled, for I felt Holmes' reassuring hand on my shoulder quite suddenly.

The figure glided forward into the brightest swath of that feeble light and I quickly tabulated some features; a man, thirty-five or so, strong, steady gaze, carefully clipped handlebar mustache, hands locked behind his back for a deceptive look of unconcern—a position Holmes had dubbed, "the Constable Clasp."

"Sergeant Conroy, I should judge," Holmes said.

"Yes, sir. And you would be another of Inspector Gregson's watchdogs come to see I don't tamper with the *corpus delicti*, eh?" A crimson tide of anger broke across his face. "But it's more likely one of your own constables on the whoremasters' payroll who would spirit away the bodies—covering their own tracks, don't you see?" he snarled in our faces.

"*Corpus delicti* is a reference to the main body of evidence of a crime and not to the victim's corpse, Conroy. And I am Sherlock Holmes."

Conroy's jaw seemed to come unhinged. "Beg pardon, sir. Gregson agreed to let me guard the bodies until Mr. Stead's group had completed their investigation. But twice now he has sent men to harass me. So I just jumped to the conclusion . . ."

"An understandable mistake, Sergeant," I said.

"Thank you, sir. But I'm not, you know. A Sergeant, that is. No more."

"So Dr. Watson and I were told. It must have been a most difficult decision for you," Holmes said, his eyes slowly sweeping the gloomy room.

"Oh, it was all of that. Police work was my life and my father's and two brothers before me. But I'd as soon be a chimney sweep or a honey dumper as serve under officers in the pay of the brothel syndicate."

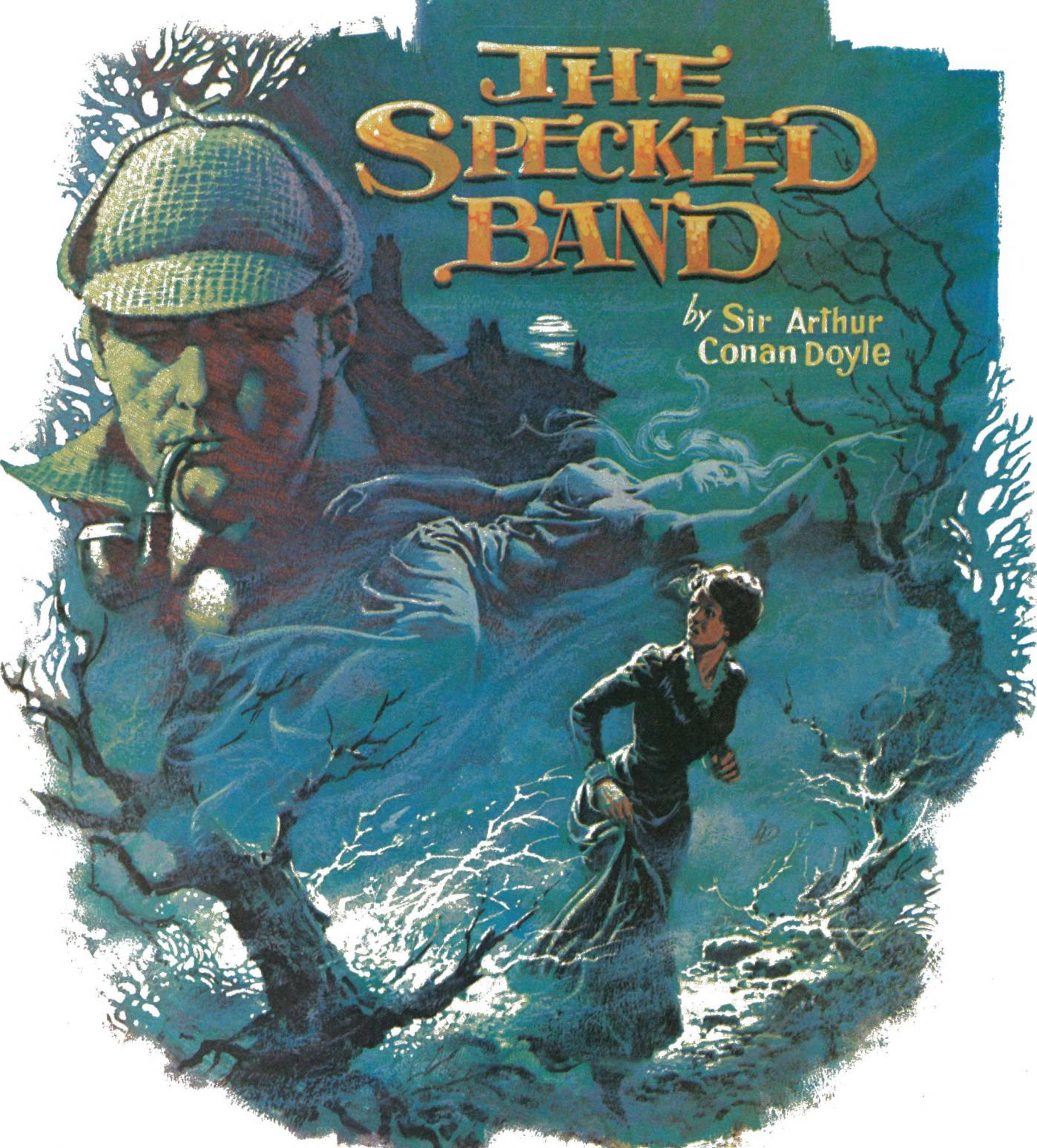
Holmes nodded silently and then stepped toward a sheet-covered figure on a wooden table. Conroy picked up a lamp and brought it to the table. He pulled back the sheet to reveal a woman's body.

"Peggy Ludden, one of Mary Jeffries' Church Street girls," he said.

I think I gasped audibly. The girl, perhaps eighteen, perhaps twenty-five (corpses are difficult to judge), had been a beauty. Even now, preserved by the cold air and perhaps some embalmer's tricks, she looked a thing of milk-white marble from the atelier of some ancient Greek sculptor. But the gasp had been a response to the bright red hair and soft, open features that made me believe for one moment that she was the waitress at the Holborne Restaurant. She was not, of course.

The body had been poorly scrubbed by the hospital and jagged brown crusts of dry blood traced the several incisions of the murder weapon. Any one of those wounds was sufficient to accomplish death's purpose.

(Continued on page 51)



# THE SPECKLED BAND

by Sir Arthur  
Conan Doyle

"The Speckled Band" is one of the original twelve stories published in *Strand Magazine* and called "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes." The first six, written during the summer of 1891, were put out-of-mind by the author as he began planning a novel about early French Canada.

When *Strand Magazine* urgently requested more of detective Holmes, Conan Doyle decided to dissuade them by deliberately inflating his price from 35 pounds to the shocking sum of 50 pounds. *Strand* agreed — by return mail.

The first two stories, written within a single week, were "The Blue Carbuncle" and the delicious tale of terror that follows.



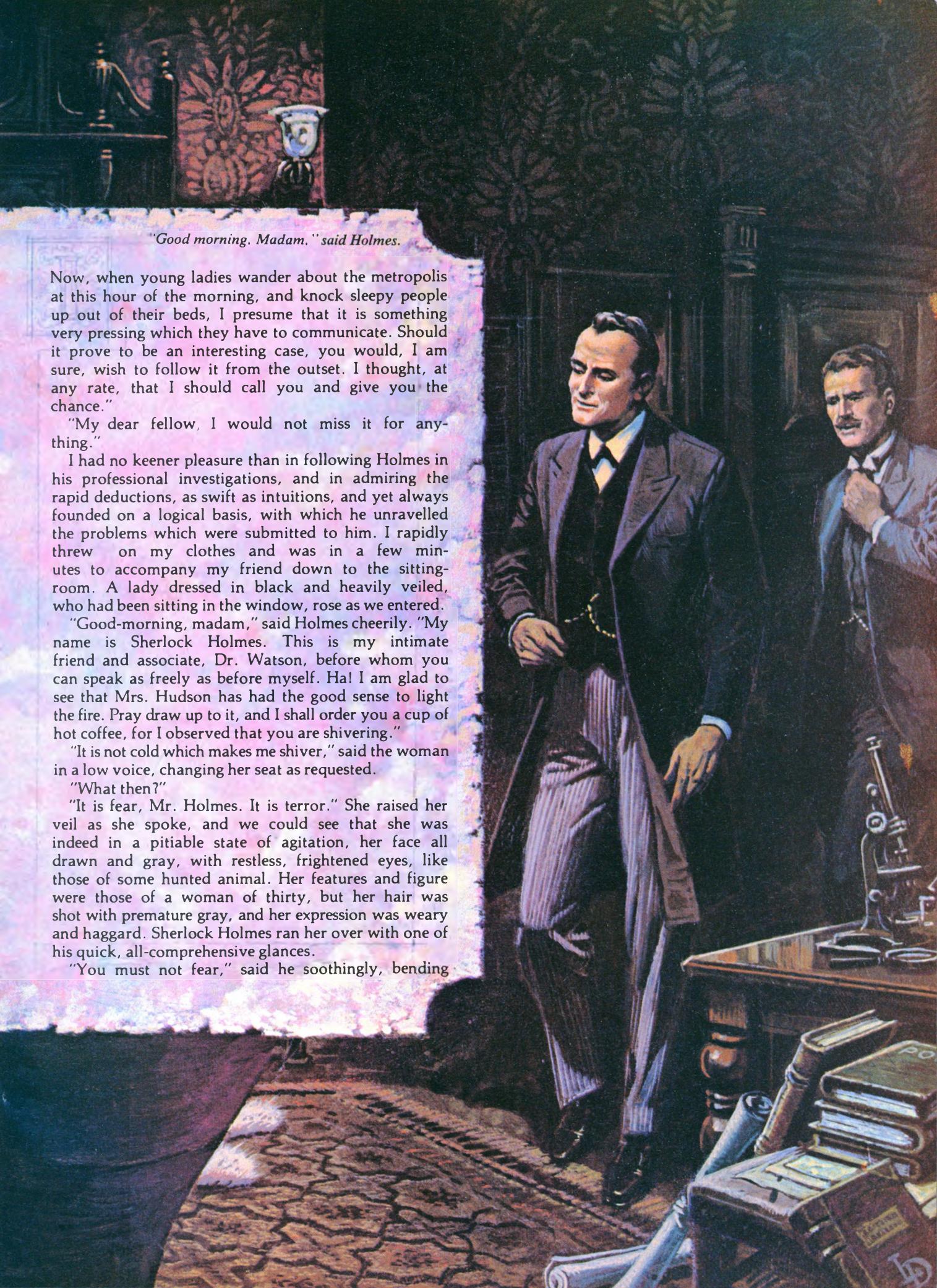
In glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace; for, working as he did rather for the love of his art than for the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. Of all these varied cases, however, I cannot recall any which presented more singular features than that which was associated with the well-known Surrey family of the Roylotts of Stoke Moran. The events in question occurred in the early days of my association with Holmes, when we were sharing rooms as bachelors in Baker Street. It is possible that I might have placed them upon record before, but a promise of secrecy was made at the time, from which I have only been freed during the last month by the untimely death of the lady to whom the pledge was given. It is perhaps as well that the facts should now come to light, for I have reasons to know that there were widespread rumors as to the death of Dr. Grimesby Roylott which tend to make the matter even more terrible than the truth.

It was early in April in the year '83 that I woke one morning to find Sherlock Holmes standing, fully dressed, by the side of my bed. He was a late riser, as a rule, and as the clock on the mantelpiece showed me that it was only a quarter-past seven, I blinked up at him in some surprise, and perhaps just a little resentment, for I was myself regular in my habits.

"Very sorry to knock you up, Watson," said he, "but it's the common lot this morning. Mrs. Hudson has been knocked up, she retorted upon me, and I on you."

"What is it, then—a fire?"

"No; a client. It seems that a young lady has arrived in a considerable state of excitement, who insists upon seeing me. She is waiting now in the sitting-room.



"Good morning, Madam," said Holmes.

Now, when young ladies wander about the metropolis at this hour of the morning, and knock sleepy people up out of their beds, I presume that it is something very pressing which they have to communicate. Should it prove to be an interesting case, you would, I am sure, wish to follow it from the outset. I thought, at any rate, that I should call you and give you the chance."

"My dear fellow, I would not miss it for anything."

I had no keener pleasure than in following Holmes in his professional investigations, and in admiring the rapid deductions, as swift as intuitions, and yet always founded on a logical basis, with which he unravelled the problems which were submitted to him. I rapidly threw on my clothes and was in a few minutes to accompany my friend down to the sitting-room. A lady dressed in black and heavily veiled, who had been sitting in the window, rose as we entered.

"Good-morning, madam," said Holmes cheerily. "My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my intimate friend and associate, Dr. Watson, before whom you can speak as freely as before myself. Ha! I am glad to see that Mrs. Hudson has had the good sense to light the fire. Pray draw up to it, and I shall order you a cup of hot coffee, for I observed that you are shivering."

"It is not cold which makes me shiver," said the woman in a low voice, changing her seat as requested.

"What then?"

"It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror." She raised her veil as she spoke, and we could see that she was indeed in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and gray, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal. Her features and figure were those of a woman of thirty, but her hair was shot with premature gray, and her expression was weary and haggard. Sherlock Holmes ran her over with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.

"You must not fear," said he soothingly, bending

forward and patting her forearm. "We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt. You have come in by train this morning, I see."

"You know me, then?"

"No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove. You must have started early, and yet you had a good drive in a dog cart, along heavy roads, before you reached the station."

The lady gave a violent start and stared in bewilderment at my companion.

"There is no mystery, my dear madam," said he, smiling. "The left arm of your jacket is spattered with mud in no less than seven places. The marks are perfectly fresh. There is no vehicle save a dog-cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the left-hand side of the driver."

"Whatever your reasons may be, you are perfectly correct," said she. "I started from home before six, reached Leatherhead at twenty past, and came in by the first train to Waterloo. Sir, I can stand this strain no longer; I shall go mad if it continues. I have no one to turn to—none, save only one, who cares for me, and he, poor fellow, can be of little aid. I have heard of you, Mr. Holmes; I have heard of you from Mrs. Farintosh, whom you helped in the hour of her sore need. It was from her that I had your address. Oh, sir, do you not think that you could help me, too, and at least throw a little light through the dense darkness which surrounds me? At present it is out of my power to reward you for your services, but in a month or six weeks I shall be married, with the control of my own income, and then at least you shall not find me ungrateful."

Holmes turned to his desk and, unlocking it, drew out a small case-book, which he consulted.

"Farintosh," said he. "Ah yes, I recall the case; it was concerned with an opal tiara. I think it was before your time, Watson. I can only say, madam, that I shall be happy to devote the same care to your case as I did to that of your friend. As to reward, my profession is its own reward but you are at liberty to defray whatever expenses I may be put to, at the time which suits you best. And now I beg that you will lay before us everything that may help us in forming an opinion upon the matter."

"Alas!" replied our visitor, "the very horror of my situation lies in the fact that my fears are so vague, and my suspicions depend so entirely upon small points, which might seem trivial to another, that even he to whom of all others I have a right to look for help and advice looks upon all that I tell him about it as the fancies of a nervous woman. He does not say so, but I can read it from his soothing answers and averted eyes. But I have heard, Mr. Holmes, that you can see deeply into the manifold wickedness of the human heart. You may advise me how to walk amid the dangers which encompass me."

"I am all attention, madam."

"My name is Helen Stoner, and I am living with my stepfather, who is the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran, on the western border of Surrey."

Holmes nodded his head. "The name is familiar to me," said he.

"The family was at one time among the richest in England, and the estates extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west. In the last century, however, four successive heirs were of a dissolute and wasteful disposition, and the

family ruin was eventually completed by a gambler in the days of the Regency. Nothing was left save a few acres of ground, and the two-hundred-year-old house, which is itself crushed under a heavy mortgage. The last squire dragged out his existence there, living the horrible life of an aristocratic pauper; but his only son, my stepfather, seeing that he must adapt himself to the new conditions, obtained an advance from a relative, which enabled him to take a medical degree and went out to Calcutta, where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he established a large practice. In a fit of anger, however, caused by some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house, he beat his native butler to death and narrowly escaped a capital sentence. As it was, he suffered a long term of imprisonment and afterwards returned to England a morose and disappointed man.

"When Dr. Roylott was in India he married my mother, Mrs. Stoner, the young widow of Major-General Stoner, of the Bengal Artillery. My sister Julia and I were twins, and we were only two years old at the time of my mother's re-marriage. She had a considerable sum of money — not less than £1000 a year — and this she bequeathed to Dr. Roylott entirely while we resided with him, with a provision that a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage. Shortly after our return to England my mother died—she was killed eight years ago in a railway accident near Crewe. Dr. Roylott then abandoned his attempts to establish himself in practice in London and took us to live with him in the old ancestral house at Stoke Moran. The money which my mother had left was enough for all our wants, and there seemed to be no obstacle to our happiness.

"But a terrible change came over our stepfather about this time. Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbours, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat, he shut himself up in his house and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path. Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics. A series of disgraceful brawls took place, two of which ended in the police-court, until at last he became the terror of the village, and the folks would fly at his approach, for he is a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger.

"Last week he hurled the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream, and it was only by paying over all the money which I could gather together that I was able to avert another public exposure. He had no friends at all save the wandering gypsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land which represent the family estate, and would accept in return the hospitality of their tents, wandering away with them sometimes for weeks on end. He has a passion also for Indian animals, which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master.

"You can imagine from what I say that my poor sister Julia and I had no great pleasure in our lives. No servant would stay with us, and for a long time we did all the work of the house. She was but thirty at



*"Oh, my God,  
Helen! The Band!  
The Speckled Band!"*

the time of her death, and yet her hair had already begun to whiten, even as mine has."

"Your sister is dead, then?"

"She died just two years ago, and it is of her death that I wish to speak to you. You can understand that, living the life which I have described, we were little likely to see anyone of our own age and position. We had, however, an aunt, my mother's maiden sister, Miss Honoria Westphail, who lives near Harrow, and we were occasionally allowed to pay short visits at this lady's house. Julia went there at Christmas two years ago, and met there a half-pay major of marines, to whom she became engaged. My stepfather learned of the engagement when my sister returned and offered no objection to the marriage; but within a fortnight of the day which had been fixed for the wedding, the terrible event occurred which has deprived me of my only companion."

Sherlock Holmes had been leaning back in his chair with his eyes closed and his head sunk in a cushion, but he half opened his lids now and glanced across at his visitor.

"Pray be precise as to details," said he.

"It is easy for me to be so, for every event of that dreadful time is scared into my memory. The manor-house, is, as I have already said, very old, and only one wing is now inhabited. The bedrooms in this wing are on the ground floor, the sitting-rooms being in the central block of the buildings. Of these bedrooms the first is Dr. Roylott's the second my sister's, and the third my own. There is no communication between them, but they all open out into the same corridor. Do I make myself plain?"

"Perfectly so."

"The windows of the three rooms open out upon the lawn. That fatal night Dr. Roylott had gone to his room early, though we knew that he had not retired to rest, for my sister was troubled by the smell of the strong Indian cigars which it was his custom to smoke. She left her room, therefore, and came into mine, where she sat for some time, chatting about her approaching wedding. At eleven o'clock she rose to leave me, but she paused at the door and looked back.

"'Tell me, Helen,' said she, 'have you ever heard anyone whistle in the dead of the night?'

"'Never,' said I.

"'I suppose that you could not possibly whistle, yourself, in your sleep?'

"'Certainly not. But why?'

"'Because during the last few nights I have always, about three in the morning, heard a low, clear whistle. I am a light sleeper, and it has awakened me. I cannot tell where it came from—perhaps from the next room, perhaps from the lawn. I thought that I would just ask you whether you had heard it.'

"'No, I have not. It must be those wretched gypsies in the plantation.'

"'Very likely. And yet if it were on the lawn, I wonder that you did not hear it also.'

"'Ah, but I sleep more heavily than you.'

"'Well, it is of no great consequence, at any rate.' She smiled back at me, closed my door, and a few moments later I heard her key turn in the lock."

"Indeed," said Holmes. "Was it your custom always to lock yourselves in at night?"

"Always."

"And why?"

"I think that I mentioned to you that the doctor kept a cheetah and a baboon. We had no feeling of security unless our doors were locked."

"Quite so. Pray proceed with your statement."

"I could not sleep that night. A vague feeling of impending misfortune impressed me. My sister and I, you will recollect, were twins, and you know how subtle are the links which bind two souls which are so closely allied. It was a wild night. The wind was howling outside, and the rain was beating and splashing against the windows. Suddenly, amid all the hubbub of the gale, there burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman. I knew that it was my sister's voice. I sprang from my bed, wrapped a shawl round me, and rushed into the corridor. As I opened my door I seemed to hear a low whistle, such as my sister described, and a few moments later a clanging sound, as if a mass of metal had fallen. As I ran down the passage, my sister's door was unlocked, and revolved slowly upon its hinges. I stared at it horror-stricken, not knowing what was about to issue from it. By the light of the corridor-lamp I saw my sister appear at the opening, her face blanched with terror, her hands groping for help, her whole figure swaying to and fro like that of a drunkard. I ran to her and threw my arms round her, but at that moment her knees seemed to give way and she fell to the ground. She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, and her limbs were dreadfully convulsed. At first I thought that she had not recognized me, but as I bent over her she suddenly shrieked out in a voice which I shall never forget, 'Oh, my God! Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!' There was something else which she would fain have said, and she stabbed with her finger into the air in the direction of the doctor's room, but a fresh convulsion seized her and choked her words. I rushed out, calling loudly for my stepfather, and I met him hastening from his room in his dressing-gown. When he reached my sister's side she was unconscious, and though he poured brandy down her throat and sent for medical aid from the village, all efforts were in vain, for she slowly sank and died without having recovered her consciousness. Such was the dreadful end of my beloved sister."

"One moment," said Holmes; "are you sure about this whistle and metallic sound? Could you swear to it?"

"That was what the county coroner asked me at the inquiry. It is my strong impression that I heard it, and yet, among the crash of the gale and the creaking of an old house, I may possibly have been deceived."

"Was your sister dressed?"

"No, she was in her night-dress. In her right hand was found the charred stump of a match, and in her left a match-box."

"Showing that she had struck a light and looked about her when the alarm took place. That is important. And what conclusions did the coroner come to?"

"He investigated the case with great care, for Dr. Roylott's conduct had long been notorious in the county, but he was unable to find any satisfactory cause of death. My evidence showed that the door had been fastened upon the inner side, and the windows were blocked by old-fashioned shutters with broad iron bars, which were secured every night. The walls were carefully sounded, and were shown to be quite solid all round, and the flooring was also thoroughly examined, with the same result. The chimney is wide, but is barred up by four large staples. It is certain, therefore, that my sister was quite alone when she met her end."



*"You have been  
cruelly used," said Holmes.*

Besides, there were no marks of any violence upon her."

"How about poison?"

"The doctors examined her for it, but without success."

"What do you think that this unfortunate lady died of, then?"

"It is my belief that she died of pure fear and nervous shock, though what it was that frightened her I cannot imagine."

"Were there gypsies in the plantation at the time?"

"Yes, there are nearly always some there."

"Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band—a speckled band?"

"Sometimes I have thought that it was merely the wild talk of delirium, sometimes that it may have referred to some band of people, perhaps to these very gypsies in the plantation. I do not know whether the spotted handkerchiefs which so many of them wear over their heads might have suggested the strange adjective which she used."

Holmes shook his head like a man who is far from being satisfied.

"These are very deep waters," said he; "pray go on with your narrative."

"Two years have passed since then, and my life has been until lately lonelier than ever. A month ago, however, a dear friend, whom I have known for many years, has done me the honour to ask my hand in marriage. His name is Armitage—Percy Armitage—the second son of Mr. Armitage, of Crane Water, near Reading. My stepfather has offered no opposition to the match, and we are to be married in the course of the spring. Two days ago some repairs were started in the west wing of the building, and my bedroom wall has been pierced, so that I have had to move into the chamber in which my sister died, and to sleep in the very bed in which she slept. Imagine, then, my thrill of terror when last night, as I lay awake, thinking over her terrible fate, I suddenly heard in the silence of the night the low whistle which had been the herald of her own death. I was too shaken to go to bed again, however, so I dressed, and as soon as it was daylight I slipped down, got a dog-cart at the Crown Inn, which is opposite, and drove to Leatherhead, from whence I have come on this morning with the one object of seeing you and asking your advice."

"You have done wisely," said my friend. "But have you told me all?"

"Yes, all."

"Miss Roylott, you have not. You are screening your stepfather."

"Why, what do you mean?"

For answer Holmes pushed back the frill of black lace which fringed the hand that lay upon our visitor's knee. Five little livid spots, the marks of four fingers and a thumb, were printed upon the white wrist.

"You have been cruelly used," said Holmes.

The lady coloured deeply and covered her injured wrist. "He is a hard man," she said, "and perhaps he hardly knows his own strength."

There was a long silence, during which Holmes leaned his chin upon his hands and stared into the crackling fire.

"This is a very deep business," he said at last. "There are a thousand details which I should desire to know before I decide upon our course of action. Yet we have not a moment to lose. If we were to come to Stoke Moran to-day, would it be possible for us to see

over these rooms without the knowledge of your step-father?"

"As it happens, he spoke of coming into town to-day upon some most important business. It is probable that he will be away all day, and that there would be nothing to disturb you. We have a housekeeper now, but she is old and foolish, and I could easily get her out of the way."

"Excellent. You are not averse to this trip, Watson?"

"By no means."

"Then we shall both come. What are you going to do yourself?"

"I have one or two things which I would wish to do now that I am in town. But I shall return by the twelve o'clock train, so as to be there in time for your coming."

"And you may expect us early in the afternoon. I have myself some small business matters to attend to. Will you not wait and breakfast?"

"No, I must go. My heart is lightened already since I have confided my trouble to you. I shall look forward to seeing you again this afternoon." She dropped her thick black veil over her face and glided from the room.

"And what do you think of it all, Watson?" asked Sherlock Holmes, leaning back in his chair.

"It seems to me to be a most dark and sinister business."

"Dark enough and sinister enough."

"Yet if the lady is correct in saying that the flooring and walls are sound, and that the door, window, and chimney are impassable, then her sister must have been undoubtedly alone when she met her mysterious end."

"What becomes, then, of these nocturnal whistles, and what of the very peculiar words of the dying woman?"

"I cannot think."

"When you combine the ideas of whistles at night, the presence of a band of gypsies who are on intimate terms with this old doctor, the fact that we have every reason to believe that the doctor has an interest in preventing his stepdaughter's marriage, the dying allusion to a band, and, finally, the fact that Miss Helen Stoner heard a metallic clang, which might have been caused by one of those metal bars that secured the shutters falling back into its place, I think that there is good ground to think that the mystery may be cleared along those lines."

"But what, then, did the gypsies do?"

"I cannot imagine."

"I see many objections to any such theory."

"And so do I. It is precisely for that reason that we are going to Stoke Moran this day. I want to see whether the objections are fatal, or if they may be explained away. But what in the name of the devil!"

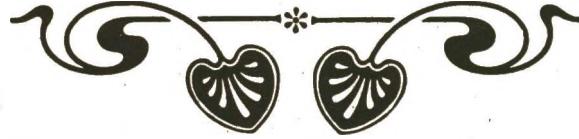
The ejaculation had been drawn from my companion by the fact that our door had been suddenly dashed open, and that a huge man had framed himself in the aperture. His costume was a peculiar mixture of the professional and of the agricultural, having a black top-hat, a long frock-coat, and a pair of high gaiters, with a hunting-crop swinging in his hand. So tall was he that his hat actually brushed the cross bar of the doorway, and his breadth seemed to span it across from side to side. A large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion, was turned from one to the other of us, while his deep-set, bile-shot eyes, and his high, thin, fleshless

(Continued on page 62)



*"Ha! You put me off, do you?"*

# A Visit From A Stranger



by Paul Ableman

*A*t ten minutes to nine, on what was to prove a very special Saturday evening, Gillian Groome lit a cigarette from the stub of her old one. It was not a characteristic action. Jill was normally a composed woman, but Jimmy was twenty minutes late and she'd just about had enough.

A moment later, the phone rang. She looked at it vengefully. He couldn't — he wouldn't dare! Not after the last time—and the time before that and the innumerable other times that he'd stood her up during the wretched three years of their relationship. But, as she shook her head incredulously, she knew that it must be him.

She went to the phone and answered it. Jimmy began:

"Jill? Listen, love, you won't believe this—"

She could hardly hear him against the muffled roar of a party. In any case, what did it matter? She had no doubt that the lengthy explanation for his absence that he was earnestly advancing was true. Jimmy was not a liar. If he said that it was vital for him to corner a certain influential guest then, as far as he was concerned, it was vital. She believed him when he said that he was having a foul time and would much rather be taking her out to dinner as they'd arranged. But so what? Jimmy Stone had a wife, a family, a career and a mistress and that was the order of their importance to him. Jill was, of course, the mistress. He was saying:

"Okay, honey? Jill? Is that okay?"

She wasn't sure what he had proposed. She was sure that she didn't much care. She said wearily:

"Yes. Yes, it's okay. What? I can't hear you, Jimmy. Oh, look, let's forget it. Well, of course I'm—oh, ring me later. Good-bye, Jimmy."

She hung up. That was it. That was the end. God, if only it was! She'd made the vow to end the affair so many times. But loneliness on her part, and desire on his, always brought them together again.

Gillian Groome was not young but she was certainly still desirable. She was 42 but, when immaculately dressed and made-up, as she was now, she looked a well-preserved 35. Jimmy Stone was 43 and looked it. He adored Jill but he would no more leave his family for her than abandon his executive's desk for a laboring job.

Gillian put out her cigarette. She smiled grimly and murmured one word:

"Trap."

This was it. Astounding. Her cynical twice-divorced mother had warned her about it. It had been the

subject of her one successful literary achievement—a radio play put out by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She had watched girl friends topple into it—the classic, and it seemed inevitable, female trap. Jill was no longer young and now found herself tied to a man who would never marry her. How had it happened?

She poured herself a small martini. Five years ago she had been a happily married woman. Now she was divorced and a part-time advertising copywriter. And she had no future at all. Children? That was it—if they'd had a child, it might have kept them together. But when she had discovered that Rick, her former husband, had been obliging the au pair girl, and a few others as well, she simply snapped off the marriage. At that time, there had been two men in the background who, she believed, would have been glad to marry her. But somehow it never quite came off. Over the next couple of years she had met several more. But, for one reason or another, she had never acquired their names either. And then, three years ago, she met Jimmy. And now, suddenly, she realized that the jaws had closed. She was truly caught.

She looked round the living room of her smart, two-room flat. It didn't look like a trap. No bamboo spikes, no looped ropes or spring-loaded iron teeth. The apartment was, in fact, cozy and yet elegant, situated on the fifth floor of a modern apartment building in a good part of North London. She had a view from her windows, partially obscured now by the new high-rise blocks, over a twinkling expanse of the metropolis. It was a nice place to live—and yet a trap. She could no more leave it than a tiger could escape his spiked pit. At least, not without Jimmy. Where would she go? She looked across at her well-stocked drinks cabinet. For a moment she felt an impulse to have a very large whisky and then head for the nearest pub. But it was only an impulse. She was too old for such adventures. All she would find would be humiliation. Well then, how does one spend one's evening in a luxury trap? Watching television, of course. She walked slowly across to the electronic chum.

She reached down to press the 'on' button when the doorbell rang. She jumped. When you have resigned yourself to solitude a signal from outside is almost alarming. Who on earth could it be? She smiled wryly. Not Prince Charming. Not an invitation to the ball. Not even a girl friend since they all seemed to be in Corfu or Jamaica. No, it would be a boy scout wanting to earn a coin by removing her wastepaper basket or a canvasser for the local Conservative candidate.

Jill was not a timid woman. She had no chains



on her door or peepholes through it. She marched straight into her little hall and opened the front door.

A man stood there. A Conservative canvasser? Possibly. He was conservatively dressed in a grey lounge suit. But he carried no clipboard and wore no rosette. Besides there was something about him — perhaps only his relative youth — which seemed incompatible with politics. He was about 30, boyishly good-looking but already with the faint grey bloom at the temples which afflicts a certain type of Englishman at a very early age. He was consulting his watch as if concerned about being late for an appointment with her.

"Yes?" she asked.

"Good evening," he replied in a pleasant voice that, she guessed, had been refined at an ancient university. "I'm Gordon Reid."

He smiled at her. It was an engaging smile and made him seem shy in a childish way. Jill could not help smiling back.

"Oh? What can I do for you?"

He didn't answer directly. He moved his hands in a faintly self-deprecating way and, as if it was an explanation for his presence, said:

"I used to live here."

"Oh? Really? Do you mean in this block?"

"In this flat. I lived here for two years. Actually, I was the first person to occupy it after the block was built."

"I see. How long ago was that?"

"I moved out ten years ago."

He smiled at her again. Jill wasn't sure what to make of him. What did he want? Had he come on a nostalgic expedition to see his old home? In that case, why didn't he say so? As we have said, Jill was not a timid person but she would certainly hesitate before inviting a strange man into her flat. She said humorously:

"Well, it's still here, as you can see."

The man nodded.

"Yes."

"Well, then—"

He seemed quite harmless and was certainly attractive. But if he wanted to come in, why couldn't he say so? Jill looked him full in the face. He smiled again but said nothing. She asked:

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

He shook his head slowly.

"No. Nothing at all."

"I see. Well—I'm alone in the flat so you'll understand if I don't invite you in."

He nodded and smiled again.

"Yes."

To avoid seeming abrupt, she asked:

"Were you happy here?"

"Yes, generally speaking."

"I'm glad. Well—goodnight, Mr.—"

"Reid. Gordon Reid."

"Goodnight, Mr. Reid."

"Good night."

With an apologetic smile, Jill eased the door shut. She listened. Yes, she could hear his footsteps moving away. Odd. What had he wanted? She felt a stab of self-reproach. She hadn't been very friendly. He was probably too shy, too British, to come right out and say that he'd like to have a look at his old home. Impulsively, she pulled the door open again. He was standing by the

lifts. His finger was, in fact, still on the summons button. Jill called:

"Mr. Reid?"

He did not respond immediately. She was just about to call again when he turned slowly towards her. Jill received the disconcerting impression that he was none too pleased at being called back. But now she felt committed.

"Mr. Reid, have you come far?"

"From Birmingham, actually."

"Good heavens. Just to see your old flat? Why didn't you say so? Anyway, I can't let you go back without seeing it. Come in and have a quick drink. But really—only a quick one. I really was—planning an early night."

Gordon Reid nodded. He said:

"That's very kind of you."

He returned slowly along the corridor. She held the door for him. He walked slowly in. She pulled the door closed behind them. She didn't know it, and nor did he, but the trap was now set.

For the next quarter of an hour, however, Jill felt that the worst hazard connected with Gordon Reid was boredom. She gave him a whisky and poured herself another martini. She tried to stimulate a conversation but the man, while remaining courteous, seemed lethargic. Nevertheless, she learned certain things about him. He had graduated in psychology but had never practiced it. His family ran a successful business in Birmingham, manufacturing components for aircraft. Gordon Reid worked in the family firm as sales manager.

Reid expressed enthusiasm at the excellent job Jill had made of decorating the flat. He asked her if she'd done it herself and she acknowledged that it was all her own work. He wandered about, murmuring compliments. He picked up a statuette. Jill asked:

"Do you like it?"

He nodded.

"It's Kali, isn't it? The Hindu goddess of destruction."

"Yes. I got her in Bombay."

He replaced the bronze figurine.

Jill suggested:

"You must have been very young when you lived here, Mr. Reid."

"I was 20 when I moved in. And I stayed until I went up to Cambridge."

"Did you live here alone?"

"Officially, yes."

"And unofficially?"

"I had a girl friend. She spent most of her time here."

"Really?"

Jill knew she was being flirtatious. Well, why not? It was a long time since she last had a chance to be. She asked:

"What was her name?"

Gordon Reid smiled ruefully.

"I'm afraid it was Doris."

"Oh well—what's in a name? Was she nice? Was she pretty?"

"Both."

"And I suppose she's now Mrs. Reid?"

He shook his head. They were seated opposite each other, cradling their drinks.

"No. As a matter of fact, I haven't seen her for ten years. I'm still single."



*"Good evening. I'm Gordon Reid."*

"What went wrong?"

He looked up quickly. She had the impression that he was grateful to her, as if he'd hoped she would provide some such lead.

"She left me. She thought I was getting morbid."

"Morbid?"

"Yes, you see—well, I was reading a lot. Freud, Nietzsche, Jung, Schopenhauer—romantics, metaphysicals—and I began to get fascinated by—extreme acts."

For some reason that she couldn't analyze, Jill felt her heart jump slightly. But she smiled encouragement and asked:

"How do you mean?"

"Well, have you ever read Dostoevsky? Have you read *The Devils*?"

"I think so, but it was years ago."

"Kirilov? Do you remember Kirilov?"

"Remind me."

Gordon Reid leaned towards her. There was an almost tangible change in his manner. His eyes glowed and his voice became urgent. He still looked boyish but not a sleepy schoolboy any longer. Now he was a young hunter.

"Kirilov tries to 'solve the problem of God. He decides that if God doesn't exist, which he thinks probable, then he must assume full responsibility for his own life. But, how can he demonstrate this? Any act he performs in a social context, no matter how extreme—murder say—must still be the act of a creature, must still leave him, Kirilov, enslaved by the laws of time and space, which form the cage of the creature. Relentless logic forces him to the conclusion that there is only one way in which he can establish his own autonomy. Do you remember now?"

"Suicide?" asked Jill, unsure whether she remembered the fact or had been inspired by Reid to perceive it.

The man punched a balled fist into the flat of his other hand, not fiercely but passionately. He got to his feet and, pacing about the room, continued his discourse.

"Precisely. In order to create himself, he must destroy himself. And Kirilov does not flinch. He shoots himself through the brain and thus becomes—perfect."

Jill again felt the leap of her heart, stronger this time. But she disciplined herself to smile and, with a faint, incredulous shake of her head, murmured: "Weird."

"Well, of course it is."

To her relief, although she didn't quite know why, Reid sank back into the armchair opposite her. The energy seemed to flow out of him. He became the rather limp figure that had first turned up at her door. He continued:

"Ludicrous. But I can't deny it — at the time I was obsessed with such unhealthy notions. Murderers fascinated me. I didn't then see that creatures like Haigh and Christie are merely pathetic monsters. I actually thought of them as God-like. I considered them to have seized their own destiny—liberated themselves from the chains of banality. Poor Doris really got scared of me."

"Why scared?"

"She thought that I was dangerous—that I could murder her."

Jill held herself very still. She suddenly realized that it was important to remain calm and controlled.

"But, of course, you couldn't have done it?"

The man laughed softly.

"Me? I've never harmed anything. But Doris was right in a sense. I did want—no, I craved—the feeling of authority that I felt must be associated with extreme acts. That was the reason I dreamed up my plan."

He looked at her pleasantly. She smiled, hoping it seemed natural.

"Your—plan?"

"Yes. At the time I was very proud of it. It seemed to me terribly ingenious."

"Did it? And what was it exactly?"

"Well, I knew that I could never harm anyone. But I was determined to get the effect. So I thought up a way in which I could murder someone without actually killing them."

"Yes, that does sound ingenious."

Reid laughed amiably.

"Essentially it was just a matter of committing myself to an extreme act but hedging the commitment round with so many conditions that it was virtually impossible that I'd ever have to do it. See what I mean?"

"Not very clearly—no."

"It's connected with this flat."

He said it softly, indeed conspiratorially. And for the first time Jill glanced stealthily at the front door. But between that suddenly seductive portal and herself was this uncertain man. Keep him talking, a voice whispered in her mind, and keep him seated.

"In what way?" she asked.

He took a small, faded pocket diary from his breast pocket.

"It's in here—written down like a contract. This was my diary for the last year I lived here. The idea for my plan came to me on my very last day. I sat down on a suitcase and wrote it all down." He smiled shyly. "Would you like to hear it?"

"Very much."

"I won't read it. Take too long. But basically the idea was that I would return to this flat in exactly ten years to the day, or, more precisely, on the third Saturday of the month. You see, that was my first fail-safe mechanism. I felt that at nine o'clock on a Saturday night there was the least chance of anyone being at home. I thought the whole thing would probably stop right there."

Jill swallowed. She heard her own voice say:

"But I was in."

Gordon nodded sympathetically.

"Yes. Now the next safety device required timing. I tried it from every part of the flat. I found that the average time needed to answer the door was 15 seconds. So I set the limit at ten seconds. If someone didn't answer in ten seconds, I'd just walk away."

Jill was conscious of a fierce wave of emotion. In the circumstances, this did not surprise her but its nature did. She felt not fear but anger. In a hard voice, she asked:

"Just to keep the record straight—how long did I take?"

"Nine seconds. Now the next condition seemed to me quite foolproof. I wouldn't ask to come in. I'd just say that I had once lived here. Then, unless I was positively invited to enter—which seemed unlikely—I'd go away again."

"But I called you back."

"Amazing, isn't it? You already told me that the fourth condition was positive."

(Continued on page 58)



*Slowly, as he took the last few steps, he raised the crashing bronze.*

# The Baker Street Irregulars

As Holmes himself might have mused:  
"Here is a strange case, indeed, Watson.  
A vast network of societies and a veritable  
library of scholarship devoted to the  
thought and deeds of a man who never  
existed! What do you suppose lies behind  
such peculiar persuasions?"

by Robert A.W. Lowndes, BSI  
("Langdale Pike")

It never would have happened at all if John H. Watson, M.D. had not been a rather careless writer, who was also concerned with making sure that his accounts of the cases of his famous friend, Sherlock Holmes, neither violated confidences nor invaded privacies. He quite unintentionally thickened the stew by arranging with another careless writer, a fellow doctor named Arthur Conan Doyle, to be the "agent" for these tales and see them from manuscript to publication.

Comments on the tales appeared in newspapers and magazines from the first (*A Study in Scarlet* was first published in 1888), but it wasn't until 1912 that the first incident of what we now consider Baker Street Irregularity appeared. A priest of the Roman Catholic Church in England, Ronald A. Knox, had long been irritated by various German pundits' "higher criticism" of the Bible. (For "higher criticism," one might substitute "nit-picking twaddle.") One day, he noted with ardor that this energy and scholarship could with equal validity and far greater fun be applied to the stories about Sherlock Holmes.

Fortunately, Father Knox was listening to himself; having a fondness for Sherlock Holmes and good mystery fiction (later, he wrote several detective novels), he sat down and wrote an essay, "Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes," which contained the three elements of Irregularity: (1) it was written as if Sherlock Holmes were a real person, also Dr. Watson, who wrote the stories (Conan Doyle was the agent); (2) it tried to make sense out of some of the discrepancies and contradictions in the tales; (3) it tried to place the stories in chronological order — for Watson's dates are very slippery. All this was done in a scholarly manner, but with just that touch of humor which reveals that the author knows it is all a joke.

Here is a paragraph from that famous essay: "Any studies in Sherlock Holmes must be, first and foremost, studies in Dr. Watson. Let us treat at once of the literary and bibliographical aspect of the question. First, as to authenticity. There are several grave inconsistencies in the Holmes cycle. For example the *Study in Scarlet* and the *Reminiscences* (sic, Fr. Knox must have meant the *Adventures*) are from the hand of John H. Watson, M.D., but in the story of the 'Man with the Twisted Lip,' Mrs. Watson addresses her husband as James. The present writer, together with three brothers (monastic brother; editor), wrote to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle for an explanation, appending their names in proper style with crosses after them, and an indication that this was the sign of the Four. The answer was that it was an error, an error, in fact, of editing. 'Nihil aliud hic latet,' says the great Sauwosch, 'nisi redactor ignorantissimus.' Yet this error gave the original

Starting as a freelance pulp science fiction editor in 1940, Robert A.W. Lowndes found himself editorial director of a chain of pulps two years later, and personally edited many western, detective, and sports titles. ("For further details of my misspent youth," he says, "see *The Futurians*, by Damon Knight, just published by Crowell.") In the '60s, he edited psychic, sexological, and weird reprint magazines, as well as a hardcover science fiction line. Mystery — the puzzle type whodunit — fiction has been among his favorites since he first read *Sherlock Holmes* in the early '30s. He is presently managing editor of *TOGETHER* magazine, and lives in Hoboken, New Jersey.

impetus to Backnecke's theory of the deuterowatson, to whom he assigns the *Study in Scarlet*, the *Gloria Scott*, and the *Return of Sherlock Holmes*. He leaves to the protowatson the rest of the *Memoirs*, the *Adventures*, and *Sign of Four*, and the *Hound of the Baskervilles*. He disputed the *Study in Scarlet* on other grounds, the statement in it, for example, that Holmes's knowledge of literature and philosophy was nil, whereas it is clear that the true Holmes was a man of wide reading and deep thought. We shall deal with this in its proper place."

A neat slap both at Doyle's carelessness and the passion of Bible critics to decide that the traditional author of a book could not have written it and it must have been several other guys!

Thus the stream of "writings about The Writings" began; but there wasn't anything like a Sherlock Holmes club until 1934. Edgar W. Smith, one of the greatest of Irregulars no longer with us, wrote: ". . . a Baker Street Irregular is a member, in good and accepted standing, of that small band of zealots which grouped itself together, one June evening in 1934, for the avowed and unashamed purpose of keeping green in perpetuity the name and fame of Sherlock Holmes." *Baker Street Journal*, Old Series, March 1948; reprinted in the New Series, March 1972. Out of that beginning came the Constitution and Buy-Laws of the Baker Street Irregulars; these are read aloud to the Irregulars assembled at every annual dinner, and the final sub-buy-law is chanted by all. (The term *buy-law* shall explain itself in a moment.)

#### Constitution of the BSI

Article I: The name of this society shall be the Baker Street Irregulars.

Article II: Its purpose shall be the study of the Sacred Writings.

Article III: All persons shall be eligible for membership who pass an examination in the Sacred Writings set by officers of the society, and who are considered otherwise suitable.

Article IV: The officers shall be: a Gasogene, a Tantalus, and a Commissionaire. The duties of the Gasogene shall be those commonly performed by a President. The duties of the Tantalus shall be those commonly performed by a secretary. The duties of the Commissionaire shall be to telephone down for ice, White Rock, and whatever else may be required and available; to conduct all negotiations with waiters; and to assess the members the prorata for the cost of the same.

#### Buy-Laws of the BSI

(1) An annual meeting shall be held on January 6th, at which those toasts shall be drunk which were published in the *Saturday Review* of January 27, 1934; after which the members shall drink at will.

(2) The current round shall be bought by any member who fails to identify, by title of story and context, any quotation from the Sacred Writings submitted by any other member.

Qualification A: If two or more members fail so to identify, a round shall be bought by each of those failing.

Qualification B: If the submitter of the quotation, upon challenge, fails to identify it correctly, he shall buy the round.

(3) Special meetings may be called at any time or any place by any one of three members, two of whom shall constitute a quorum.

Qualification A: If said two are of opposite sexes, they shall use care in selecting the place of meeting, to avoid misinterpretation (or interpretation, either, for that matter).

Qualification B: If such two persons of opposite sexes be clients of the Personal Column of the *Saturday Review*, the foregoing does not apply; such persons being presumed to let their consciences be their guides.

(4) All other business shall be left for the monthly meeting.

(5) There shall be no monthly meeting.

The above constitution and buy-laws have never been altered, but they aren't much followed today, except that the annual meeting does take place on or around January 6th — actually, the Friday closest to the 6th, except that it be neither the 1st nor the 2nd. And the Commissionaire, Dr. Julian Wolfe, is involved in making the arrangements. One does not hear of the Gasogene or the Tantalus.

In time, as membership in the Irregulars grew, the buy-law about challenges and the penalty for the loser simply died due to the expense and the inroads of Alcoholics Anonymous. The actual official examination by the three officers of a prospective member on his knowledge of the *Canon* (the complete Sherlock Holmes, 56 short stories and 4 novels) withered also. Edgar Smith wrote further, in 1948: "An Irregular is, in sober fact, any kindred soul who gives spontaneously and abundantly of his time and thought in devotion to the *Sacred Writings* and to the writings about The Writings; . . . He is the kind of person, in a word, who reads the *Baker Street Journal*, and gives it his support.

"That is why Ben Abramson has offered, and has been empowered to offer, honorary Ir-

regularity to all who subscribe to the Journal."

Few Irregulars are exclusively Sherlockians, either in the sense that they read no mystery fiction other than the Sherlock Holmes stories, or no comments on same save for the type found in the *Baker Street Journal*, or are they mystery buffs alone. The BSI register happily includes Dr. Isaac Asimov, the closest thing this century has seen to a Renaissance Man; his over-100 published books touch upon almost every subject *except* Sherlock Holmes! (When I asked him, at one meeting, when we were going to see "Asimov's Sherlock Holmes," he replied that the game was over; Baring-Gould had said the last word. Needless to say, I and various other Irregulars disagree.)

Full membership in the society comes by way of the Titular Investiture. Peter Blau, leading light of the Red Circle (the Washington, D.C. Scion Society of the BSI) gives a short history of the Investitures in a booklet listing all invested Irregulars that was distributed at the 1973 Annual Dinner. (That was the one at which the writer received his investiture, for work on *The Scandal Sheet*, the publication of the Scandalous Bohemians of New Jersey.) 256 full members are listed; since then, of course, some have passed on, and many others have been invested.

Mr. Blau tells us: "The special meeting of the BSI at the Murray Hill Hotel on March 31st, 1944 — the first (and only) dinner to which the fair sex has ever been invited — was called to celebrate the publication of Christopher Morley's *Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson*, Edgar W. Smith's *Profile by Gaslight*, and Ellery Queen's *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*. The large number of enthusiasts who considered themselves to be members of the BSI caused no little confusion, and it was obviously necessary that future meetings be kept to a reasonable size. In his newsletter of May 1944, the Buttons-cum-Commissionaire reported: 'At the suggestion of the Gasogene and the Tantalus, and to meet the problems which recent distasteful publicity has created, it is intended that affiliation with the organization will henceforth be identified and constrained by the establishment of Adventures in Membership (there being 60 stories, therefore 60 members) each constituting an investiture to be maintained for life or until resignation, and new applicants for adherence to be susceptible of consideration only upon the existence of a vacancy.'

At first, members applied for investiture relating to a particular story; later, applicants

had to accept such tales as were available. Looking through the outdated 1973 list, we see members invested with the titles of stories in the Canon, but, as Mr. Blau states: "Fortunately for many of our present members, the limiting rules were not followed strictly; the first Investitures derived from the Unreported Cases (adventures which Watson refers to in various stories, but which he never wrote up; editor) were awarded in 1951, and the Canonical limit of 60 was breached in 1952." And later, although the exact year is not given, new members were invested with the names of persons appearing in the various stories. For example, Mr. James H. Bready was invested in 1955 as "The Disappearance of James Philmore." Lord Gore-Booth was invested in 1953 as "The Three Gables," the story in which Langdale Pike appears.

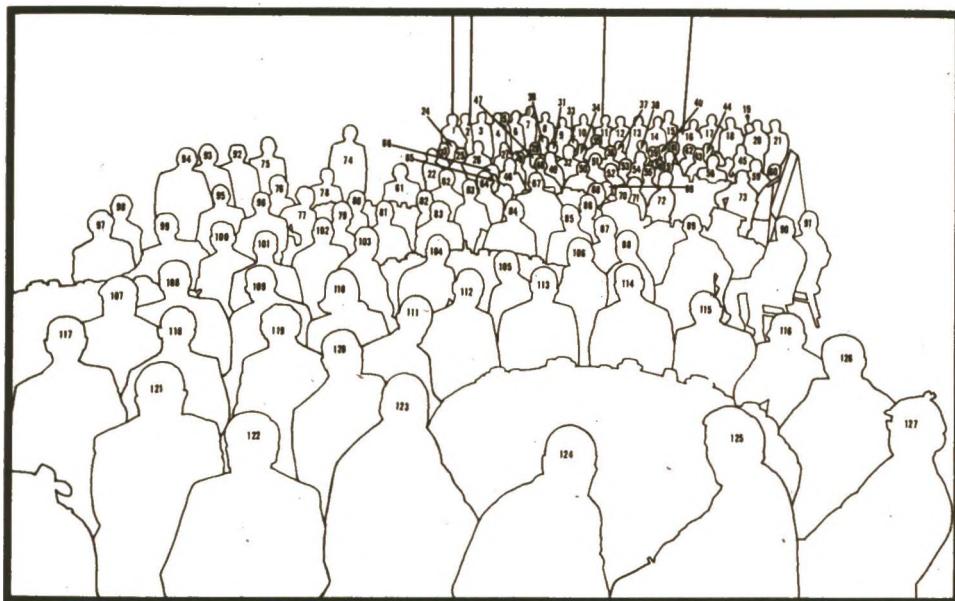
The investitures, at first, were illuminated certificates. Then, in 1949, "The first order of business at the 1949 Annual Dinner was the presentation of the Irregular Shilling to those 'who have made an outstanding contribution to the cause in the year just past.' These were the first Shillings, awarded to 12 Irregulars and 5 whose Investitures dated from 1944. Shillings were given to all those subsequently chosen for membership, and, subject to the availability of the coins, to those holding the original Investitures." A shilling was the fee that Sherlock Holmes paid the little band of street urchins he called his "Baker Street Irregulars" when they reported with information. They were empowered by Holmes to "go everywhere, see everything, overhear everyone."

*The Baker Street Journal, An Irregular Quarterly of Sherlockiana*, edited by Julian Wolff, M.D. (whose name is sometimes confused with that of an even more famous Wolfe, Nero, said by some Irregulars to be the son of Holmes and *The Woman*, Irene Adler) saw its 100th issue with the date of June 1971. It is presently in its 27th volume (in the new series, which started in 1951). Edgar W. Smith was the devoted editor from the beginning of the New Series until his death in 1960, when Dr. Wolff took over the task of typing, cutting, and pasting, preparing a dummy for publication. This he did up to and including the issue of December 1974, Volume 24, Number 4 (the magazine has always been quarterly in the New Series). In that issue, page 257, Dr. Wolff noted: "This is the end of another era for *The Baker Street Journal*. As most of our readers are aware (see page 180 of the September issue), the Journal will be published by Fordham University Press, beginning with



# THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

1 Karl Meyer	New York, N.Y.
2	
3 George F. Burrows	Cambridge, Mass.
4 Matthew Fox	New Hope, Pa.
5 Nicholas Nelson	New York, N.Y.
6 David H. Galerstein	Jericho, N.Y.
7 Fred T. Kelly	Sioux City, Iowa
8 Robert N. Brodin	Forest Hills, N.Y.
9 Banesh Hoffman	New York, N.Y.
10 Edgar Lawrence	New York, N.Y.
11 Arthur H. Lewis	Philadelphia, Pa.
12 Herbert Kenny	Boston, Mass.
13 John Thomas Mahoney	New York, N.Y.
14 John Schrandt	Island Lake, Ill.
15 Byron Scott	Old Greenwich, Conn.
16 Burt A. Glass, M.D.	Whitestone, N.Y.
17 William Batiuchok, M.D.	Flushing, N.Y.
18 Ezra A. Wolff, M.D.	Forest Hills, N.Y.
19 Howard Luther	Cincinnati, Ohio
20 Robert W. Hahn	Oak Park, Ill.
21 James Lione, M.D.	Little Neck, N.Y.
22 David A. Weiss	New York, N.Y.
23 Everett Hoffman	New York, N.Y.
24 Edward Starr	Garden City, N.Y.
25	
26	
27 Irwin F. Deutsch	New York, N.Y.
28	
29 Edmund L. Tink	Bethesda, Md.
30 Stanfield D. Hill	Douglaston, N.Y.
31 George J. McCormack	Brooklyn, N.Y.
32 Thomas F. Grady, Jr.	Jamestown, N.D.
33 Charles Sullivan	
34 John Kelsh	New York, N.Y.
35 Thomas M. McDade	Purchase, N.Y.
36	
37 Patterson Smith	Montclair, N.J.
38 Eric H. Silk	Don Mills, Ont.
39 Samuel F. Howard	Brooklyn, N.Y.
40 Richard Sloan	Philadelphia, Pa.
41 George Fletcher	Brooklyn, N.Y.
42 John M. Linsenmeyer	Greenwich, Conn.
43 Edward F. Clark, Jr.	New York, N.Y.
44 James Saunders	Long Island City, N.Y.
45 Robert Mangler	Chicago, Ill.
46 James Roach	New York, N.Y.
47 Bryson F. Kalt	New York, N.Y.
48 Alexander M. Robb	Bronxville, N.Y.
49	
50 Red Smith	New York, N.Y.
51 Donald A. McDonough	Philadelphia, Pa.
52 Thomas L. Stix, Jr.	Norwood, N.J.
53 Frank J. Eustace	Philadelphia, Pa.
54 Marvin E. Aronson, M.D.	Philadelphia, Pa.
55 James Nelson	Atl. Highlands, N.J.
56 Billy Ross	Newark, Del.
57	
58 E. A. Denbo, M.D.	Camden, N.J.
59 William R. Smith	Philadelphia, Pa.
60 John B. Koelle	Swarthmore, Pa.
61 Peter E. Blau	Washington, D.C.
62 P. Christian Steinbrunner	Middle Village, N.Y.
63 James C. Iraldi	Long Island City, N.Y.
64 Andrew Fusco	Morgantown, W.V.
65 Thomas L. Stix	New York, N.Y.
66 Charles Kaegebehn	Hoboken, N.J.
67 John Lawlor	New York, N.Y.



68 William D. Jenkins	Wayne, N.J.	68 John Holzapfel	Westport, Conn.
69 Will Oursler	New York, N.Y.	69 Arthur J. Gutman	Baltimore, Md.
70 Herbert Brean	New York, N.Y.	70 Philip Nathanson	Owings Mills, Md.
71 Daniel Lindley		71 Charles B. Humphrey	Baltimore, Md.
72 H.C. Potter	New York, N.Y.	72 J. Hoxie Haas, Jr.	White Plains, N.Y.
73 Herman Beerman, M.D.	Philadelphia, Pa.	73 Forrest Athey, Jr.	Amherst, N.H.
74 Joseph F. Daniloski	Randallstown, Md.	74 Norman S. Nolan	Middletown, N.J.
75		75 Elias Abelson	Princeton, N.J.
76 Herbert Salkin	New York, N.Y.	76 Fred Page	Dunellen, N.J.
77 Ira Wolff	New York, N.Y.	77 Paul S. Clarkson, Jr.	Randallstown, Md.
78 Morris Rosenblum	New York, N.Y.	78 William E. Fleischauer	Ellisott City, Md.
79 Rev. Henry T. Folsom	Old Saybrook, Conn.	79 Norman Davis	Chevy Chase, Md.
80 Charles Goodman, D.D.S.	New York, N.Y.	80 Andrew Page	Bronx, N.Y.
81 Keith Paulison	Pompton Lakes, N.J.	81 Donald A. Yates	East Lansing, Mich.
82 Nathan L. Bengis	New York, N.Y.	82 Rex Pinson, Jr.	Waterford, Conn.
83 Herman Hearst, Jr.	Shrub Oak, N.Y.	83 Frank A. Purcell	Oradell, N.Y.
84 David Musto, M.D.	New Haven, Conn.	84 Rodney A. Mannion, M.D.	Michigan City, Ind.
85 Walter Pond	New York, N.Y.	85 John Ball	Encino, Calif.
86 Charles E. Honce	New York, N.Y.	86 Cameron Hollyer	Toronto, Ont.
87 Robert Adelson		87 Keith Jenkins	Suffern, N.Y.
88 Robert A.W. Lowndes	Hoboken, N.J.	88 William J. Walsh	Suffern, N.Y.
89 Rev. Leslie Marshall	St. Petersburg, Fla.	89 Andres Jay Peck	Bronx, N.Y.
90 Carl H. Anderson	Philadelphia, Pa.	90 Joseph H. Gillies	Philadelphia, Pa.
91 Julian Wolff, M.D.	New York, N.Y.	91 Milton Lenowitz	New York, N.Y.
92 Morris Lebowitz	North Belmore, N.Y.	92 David B. Pearce, M.D.	New York, N.Y.
93		93 John Bennett Shaw	Santa Fe, N.M.
94		94 H.W. Starr	Wynnewood, Pa.
95 Paul S. Clarkson	Holden, Mass.	95 John P. Crotty, M.D.	St. Louis, Mo.
96 Philip Sherman	Baltimore, Md.	96 Ralph E. Edwards	Baltimore, Md.
97 March Hanf	Baltimore, Md.	97 David Skene Melvin	London, Ont.

1975....

"The present Editor of the Journal will continue in that capacity . . ."

With 1975, the BSJ became a more handsome publication, neatly printed in a slightly larger format; and the subscription price rose from \$4 to \$10 per year. In the June 1977 issue, a further change was noted:

"As the Journal continues to grow (bigger and better, our readers say), so does the work involved in producing it. In fact, the duties of editing it are now too great to be handled by any one person. Therefore, it has been decided to institute a management by troika—a word that has been under a shadow for some time, but which we hope to rehabilitate.

"Accordingly, John Linsenmeyer ("Tobias Gregson"), Albert Rosenblatt ("Inspector Bradstreet"), and Chris Steinbrunner ("The Tankerville Club Scandal") have graciously volunteered—under some compulsion, to be sure—to carry on."

The one activity of the Baker Street Irregulars other than the Annual Dinner is the Silver Blaze Handicap. It takes place on a Friday in September, at one of the New York City race tracks. Arrangements are made with the track for a special seating for members of the BSI and a special printing of the program wherein the final race of the day is designated as the "Silver Blaze." The fee paid by BSI members in advance includes a "stirrup cup" at the Players Club; chartered bus to and from the track, and lunch. Drinks other than the stirrup cup and all bets are at the attendee's expense. The winning horse in the "Silver Blaze Handicap" is, of course, designated as Silver Blaze and a copy of the first edition of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is presented to the owner. Thomas Stix, of the Scandalous Bohemians of New Jersey, has been handling the Silver Blaze Handicap for the past decade.

What happens at the famous Annual Meeting? First of all, all subscribers to *The Baker Street Journal* are advised by mail before Thanksgiving of the year before of the date and place. The place has been the Regency Hotel since 1972 and the reception room on the ground floor, adjacent to the dining room, has seemed to get smaller year by year as more and more Irregulars have shown up with their guests. Any Irregular may bring guests, providing that all arrangements are made in advance; the price of the dinner includes gratuities; drinks are purchased out of pocket.

The BSI remains a stag club, but through a tradition whose origin remains obscure, one

lady is invited to the reception, to be Irene Adler. When it is time, the Commissionaire blows a police whistle and the first toast is to "The Woman," whereupon Miss Adler is escorted out and the Irregulars troop in to Mrs. Hudson's Dinner Table.

There are four Irregular Toasts and four Canonical Toasts. The rites and ceremonies continue as coffee is served, with the reading of the Constitution and Buy-Laws, Sherlock Holmes's Prayer (we have several ordained priests and ministers on tap), and the responsive reading of the litany from "The Musgrave Ritual." We hear again the worn tapes of Jim Montgomeroy singing "The Road to Baker Street," and "Aunt Clara," in which various members join in. That is followed by the "Standing on the Terrace" as we pay respects to those Irregulars who have passed on since the last Annual Dinner.

Guests (postulants) are introduced; new investitures are announced and the certificate with the Irregular Shilling handed to the new full member. There is also a Two Shilling Award, but that is given very rarely—usually in recognition of something reasonably close to lifetime devotion to Sherlock Holmes and the BSI.

Trifling monographs, both serious and whimsical, are presented; there may be a film or some demonstration relating to the world of Sherlock Holmes. (At the 1977 Dinner we all discovered what a dark lantern looks—and smells—like.)

After a brief recess to allow attendees a last chance at the bar, reports are heard from the Scion Societies—delegations attending from Washington, D.C., Boston, Chicago, and innumerable points in between—and beyond, if the indefatigable John Bennett Shaw, leader of The Brothers Three of Moriarty, New Mexico, is not abroad at the time of the meeting. (He's usually right there!)

The Baker Street Irregulars have grown considerably since the days when membership was limited to 60, and Scion Societies abound all over the country. A subscription to the *Journal* confers honorary membership, although one attends one's first Annual Dinner as the guest of another member. While all that may sound terribly exclusive, the fact is that those who are really dedicated to Sherlock Holmes do manage to find kindred souls; and, of course, there are many who confine their Sherlockian activities to the local Scion Society.

The writings about The Writings proliferate



*Isaac Asimov, Associate Professor of Bio-chemistry at the University of Boston School of Medicine; an internationally known scientist and author; and, a member of the Baker Street Irregulars.*

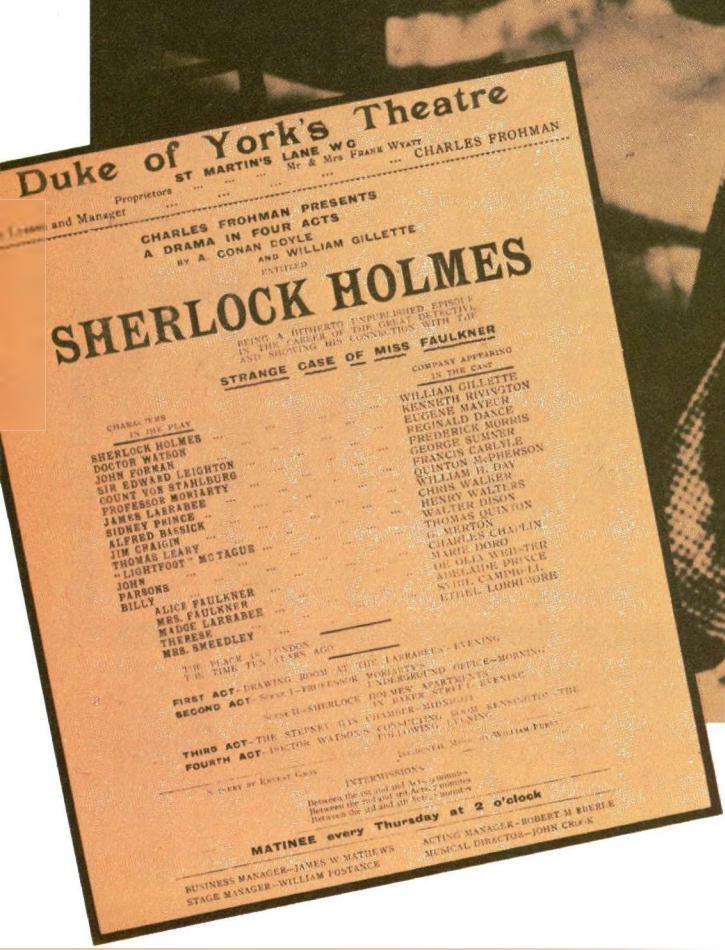
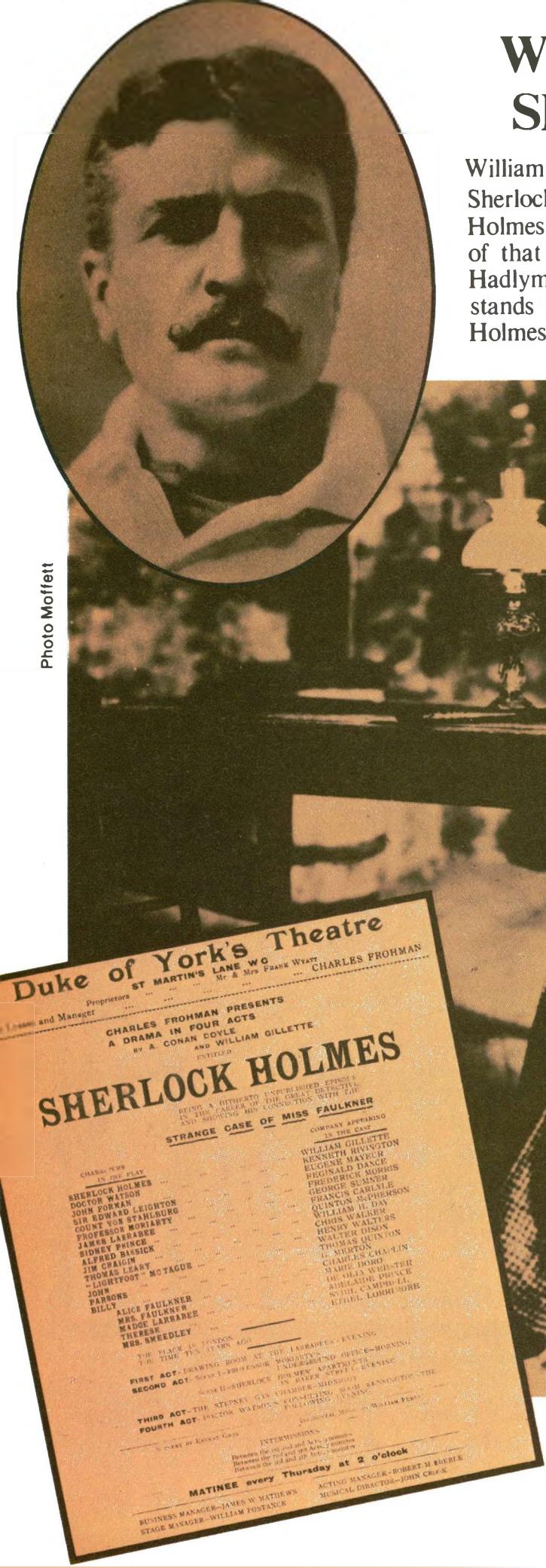
year by year. Despite the fact that it's no longer realistic to hope to explore some aspect of Sherlock Holmes and his world that *no* Sherlockian has ever touched on before, a fresh touch on already-treated subjects is al-

ways possible. That is what keeps the *Baker Street Journal*, and the various publications of the Scion Societies going. As one Irregular puts it: "Never has so much been written by so many for so few." ●

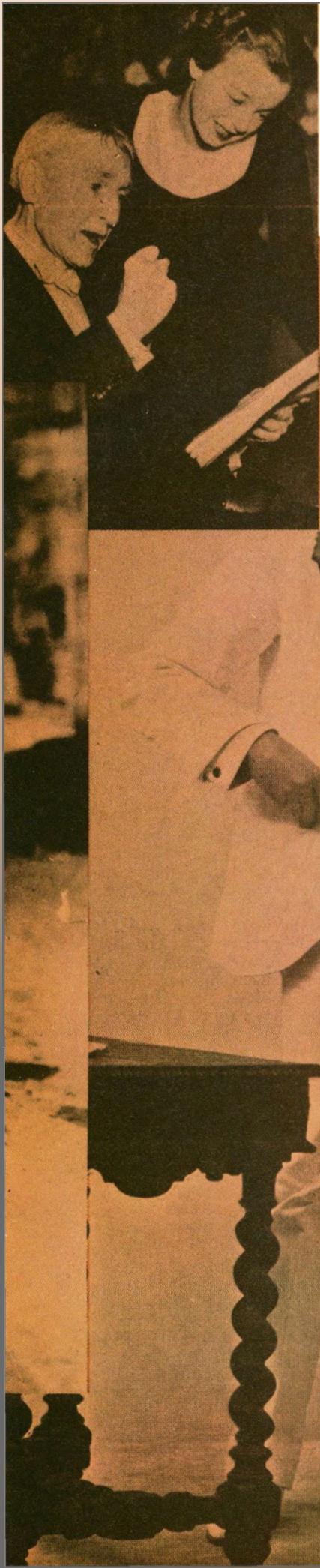
# WILLIAM E. GILLETTE: SHERLOCK ON STAGE

William Gillette (1855 to 1937) was the first stage Sherlock Holmes. He was so successful as detective Holmes that he built "Gillette Castle" from the receipts of that one role. In the lovely Yankee community of Hadlyme, Connecticut, the imposing stone mansion stands in tribute to the man who played Sherlock Holmes more than 4,000 times.

Photo Moffett



WILLIAM GILLETTE IN HIS PLAY,  
"SECRET SERVICE": THE ACTOR as  
He Appeared as the Union Spy in the Play  
Which He Wrote and Which Was First  
Produced in Philadelphia in 1895.



*A FAMOUS ACTOR COMES BACK TO BROADWAY.* William Gillette, the *Sherlock Holmes* of the American stage years ago, rehearsing his part in "Three Wise Fools," in which he appeared with Mary Rogers, daughter of Will Rogers. Mr. Gillette was 80 years old.  
(Associated Press.)

(From a photograph by Sarony, New York.)

Wm. E. Gillette

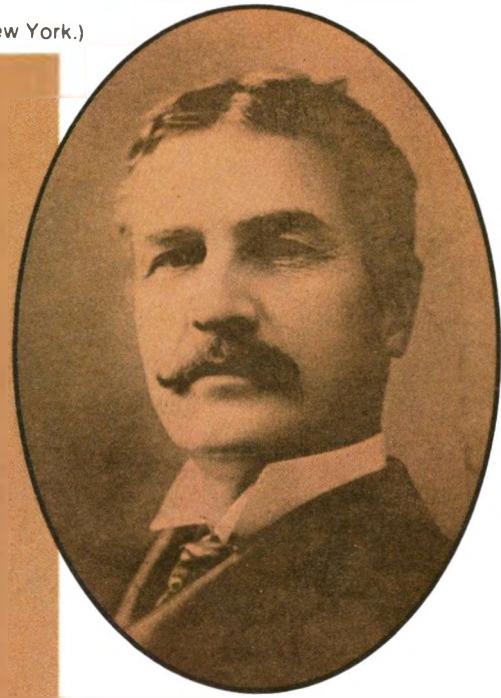
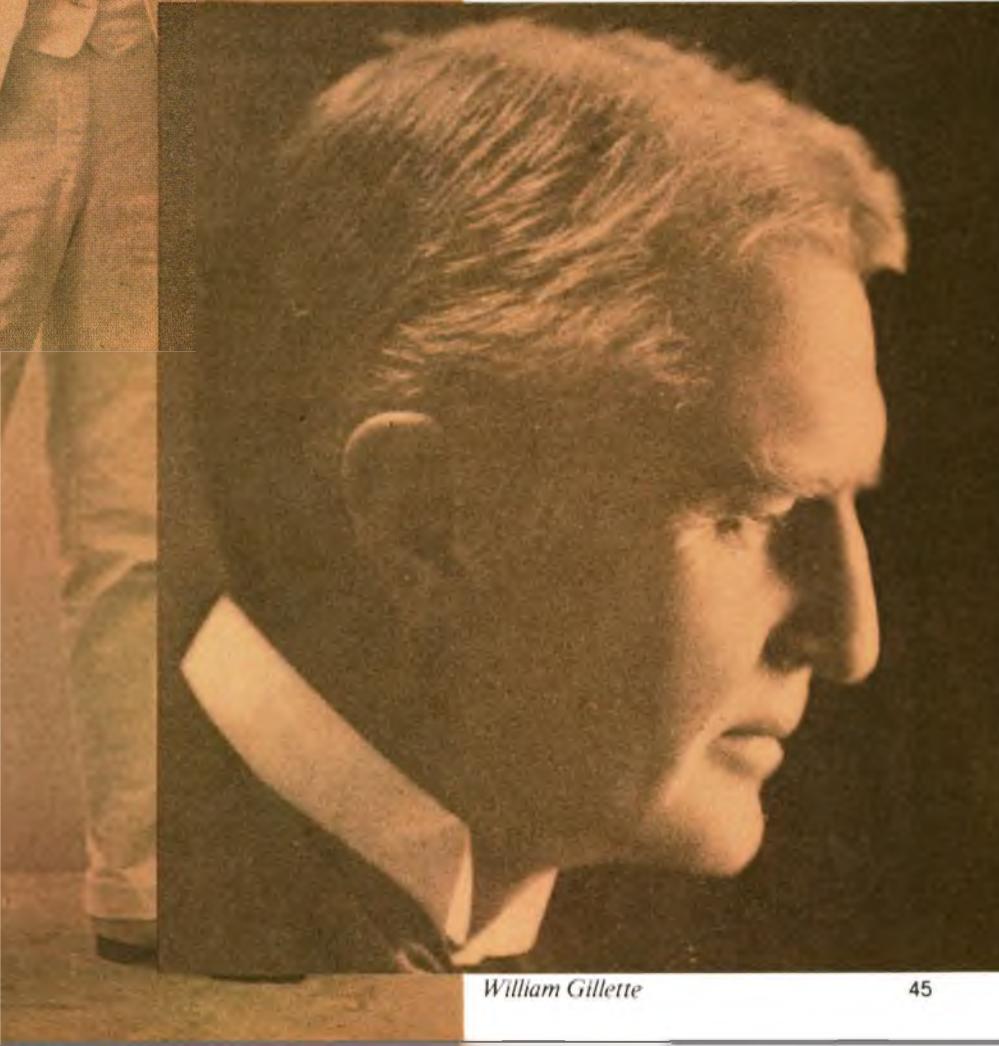


Photo Pach Bros., N.Y.

*A new study head of William Gillette*

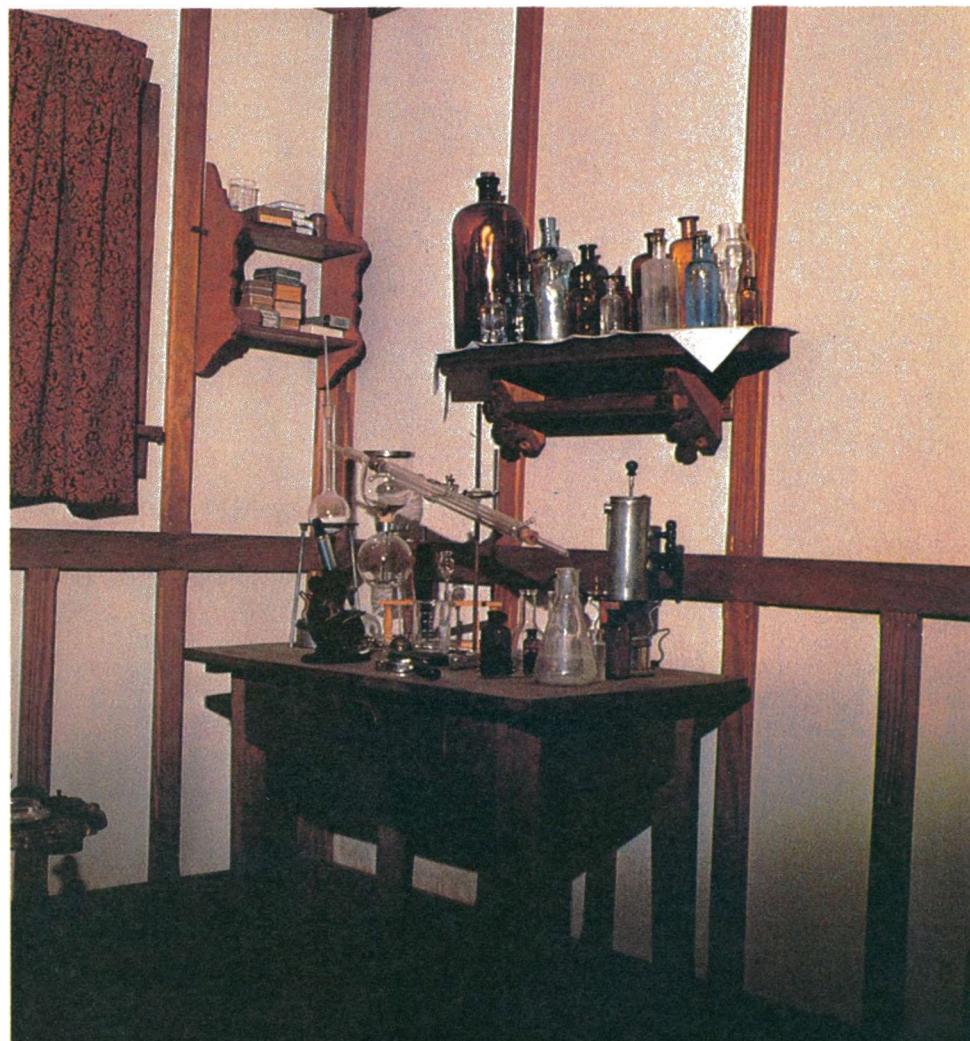


William Gillette



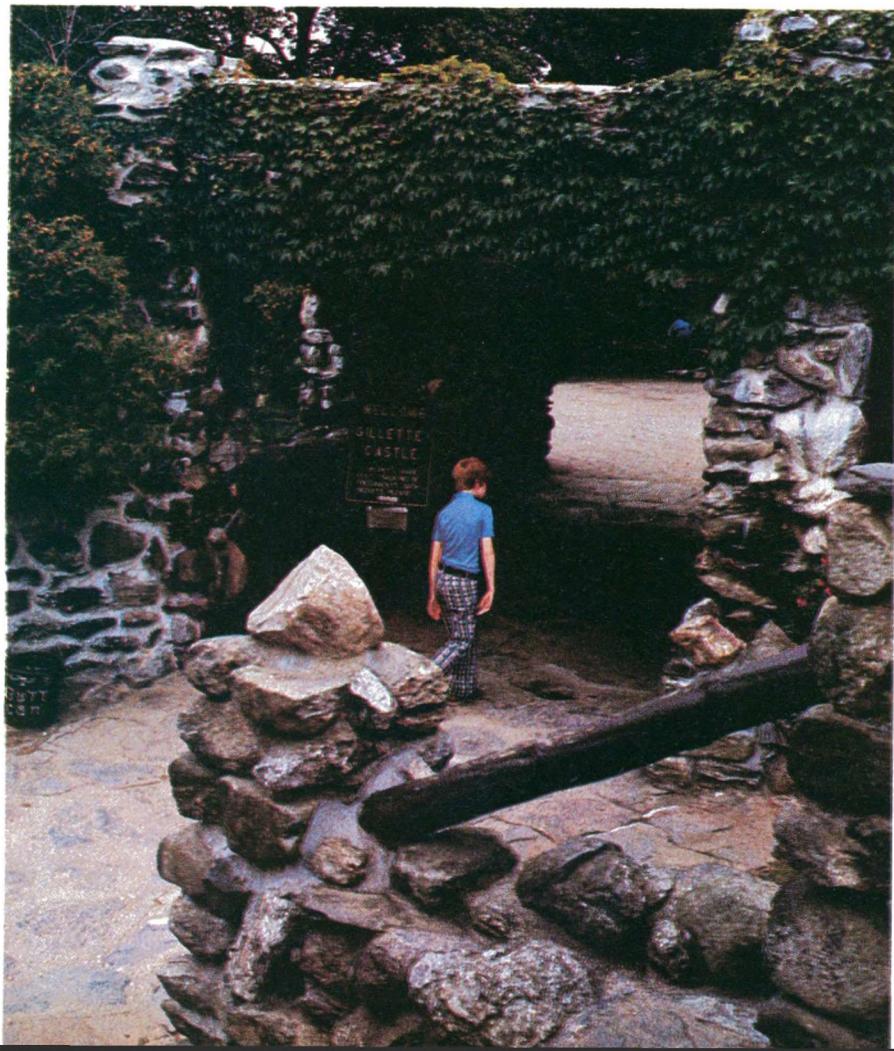
Caseloads of theatrical memorabilia bring theatre and Holmes buffs to the castle. One of these, an English theatre program, reminds us of the huge success the Yankee Gillette scored in Holmes' native land, and of the unknown "Charles Chaplin" he hired to play *Billy, the page*.

Gillette was famed for the attention he gave to production details. Here we see Holmes' Persian slipper/tobacco pouch, and the master detective's chemistry laboratory. Gillette wrote 25 plays, of which one, *The Secret Service*, a Civil War spy story, was revived in New York only two years ago and presented on National Educational Television.









*More details from "Life with Gillette and Holmes": tea for Holmes and Watson; the famed Stradivarius and the trusty pistol; the impressive grounds of Gillette Castle. Gillette's devotion to the latest technical advances on stage carried over to his home where furniture was mounted on tracks, his desk telephone swiveled back and forth, and lights were controlled from a master panel.*



*I heard his muffled cry: "Come, Watson, the game is afoot!"*

# Mad Midwife

(Continued from page 22)

The many gratuitous slashes only spoke of the killer's unhealthy frame of mind.

Holmes carefully examined the wounds with his magnifying glass. "Yes. Yes. Straight and deep. I can see why Gregson thought of a midwife." He took out his jackknife and began scraping out each fingernail, depositing the particles in one of his small envelopes. Then he spread the lips apart and tried to unclench the teeth.

"No good, Holmes," I said. "You will never open that mouth again short of smashing the teeth with a hammer."

He bent lower to examine the mouth closely. There was something there between the two front teeth, something that, at four feet, I could barely see. He managed to scrape it out with his knife and examined it with the glass. "A sliver of wood, I'd say. See what you think, Watson."

He handed me the glass and knife with the silver balanced on the blade. "Quite right, Holmes. Wood it is. A bit of a toothpick, I'd judge."

"That would seem likely," Holmes said, depositing the sliver in another small envelope. Now he turned to a second table and Conroy followed with the lamp. Removing this sheet uncovered a coarser vision than the first. A good ten years older, she also looked less at peace than Peggy Ludden. Those extra years at her trade had left indelible traces of pain and hopelessness on Dora Stoddard's face.

"They say she was one of Sonia Leblanc's girls," said Conroy. "A bit long-in-the-tooth for that high-priced a place. That's no ordinary joy house, you know. Every girl a well-mannered beauty, I'm told. I never worked the district, myself."

"I know of Mary Jeffries' infamous houses, of course," mused Holmes, "but Sonai Leblanc?"

"Of course. That scandal back in '68. Procuree to the crowned heads of Euro . . ." Holmes broke off as he slapped the back of one hand into the palm of the other. "Leblanc! It means 'white' in French. Yet she is several years dead, Agnes White."

"But her daughter lives," Conroy half-crowed. "Educated in Paris, too. Supposed to play the piano, paint oil pictures, read real literature in three languages and run her old mother's houses better than Aggie ever dreamed. Medical inspections every Monday morning, where the other houses—the best of them—never do it more than monthly. And annual holidays abroad with pay!"

"Sounds like paradise," Holmes grunted. "We shall have to see both of them, that harpy, Mary Jeffries, and the extraordinary Madame Leblanc. Write out their addresses."

"The Jeffries woman is 125 Church, near Elm Park Road and . . .

Holmes handed him a pencil and pad. "Both of them, Sergeant. Please." Conroy shrugged and painfully wrote out the addresses.

"I wouldn't mind seeing the Leblanc place, myself," he said, handing the pad back to Holmes. "I haven't been out Kensington way in a dog's age."

"Kensington," I exclaimed, unable to accept the fact of a brothel in those select environs.

"Oh, yes. A regular mansion, they say."

"Where's better?" asked Holmes. "Madame Leblanc is applying the 'least likely' technique. A bevy of

prostitutes deep within a forest of titles, wealth and propriety. My hat is off to her." And he actually raised his deerstalker cap from his head.

Holmes turned back to Dora Stoddard's body and gave it the same close examination he had applied to the first. "Not quite so neat a job," he said of the wounds.

"I noticed that myself, sir," Conroy said, holding the lamp a bit closer. "Like the killer was in more of a hurry."

"Or in the throes of his strange passion," I said. "And this nonsense about every surgeon leaving his personal signature on his knife work is just that—nonsense. I have seen two jobs by the same pair of hands that were different as night and day."

"Perhaps," Holmes mused. Then, turning to Conroy, he said, "Did Gregson take the women's effects with him?"

"No. I asked him if they could be left until Mr. Stead's people could examine them and he agreed." Conroy grinned. "I tell you, the Salvation Army and this women's movement has them in a sweat." And thus saying, he picked up two canvas sacks from the floor and deposited them near a small work table. He emptied the contents of the first onto the table.

"Stoddard's things," he said. There was a bright lavender gown, crimson silk underpants, black leather pumps with silver buckles, a Chinese silk scarf of red and blue and a grey shantung muff. From the muff, Conroy produced a compact of face powder, two pounds, six shillings, eight pence (a tidy sum for that day), and a tintype of a handsome naked baby lying on its stomach.

"A niece or nephew but not her own child, I'll venture," Conroy said. "Doxies don't have babies if they can prevent it. And they most often can." He replaced Dora's things in the first canvas bag and unloaded the second.

Peggy Ludden's things were far simpler. A green cotton dress without ornamentation, grey linsey-woolsey underpants that must have chafed like the devil, a woolen shawl, unadorned pumps, a ten shilling note, some coins adding to 18 shillings-ten pennies, and a net bag that looked a bit lumpy still.

"What remains in the bag?" Holmes asked.

"Nothing very helpful," Conroy said, turning the bag upside-down. A small bottle of whiskey, nearly empty, slid out, as well as two little paper packets. Holmes unfolded the papers to reveal a bit of meat pie in one and three chocolate creams in the other. There was also a three-penny tram ticket.

"As I said, sir, nothing helpful."

"If, in any given case," Holmes said, taking the net bag in hand, "we knew precisely which details were important and which quite useless, we should never have an unsolved crime." From the bag he produced a small, dog-eared booklet that had stuck there. It was a Salvation Army tract: "My Life on Earthly Hell . . . The History of a Fallen Woman."

We left Sergeant Conroy standing at the bottom of the Cold Room stairs as Holmes and I headed for Church Street, seat of Mary Jeffries' harlot empire. The atmosphere there would have to be poor. Under rising public pressure, the police had recently charged her with indecent practices.

"Wouldn't it be pleasant if we were to dig to the bottom of this nasty business by Saturday?" Holmes asked along the way.

"Why Saturday?"

"Haven't you seen the posters and handbills, my good fellow? There will be a giant rally in Hyde Park to celebrate the extension of the age of sexual consent by Parliament. The Booth family and their Army will be there, Mr. Stead, Josephine Butler, no doubt, and the intellectual radicals; Bernard Shaw, of course, and the improbable Oscar Wilde, perhaps."

"But what has that to do with the Midwife murders?"

"Peggy and Dora will be on every speaker's lips. If you listen closely, you can hear them rehearsing the eulogies right this moment. And demanding that no stone be left unturned in apprehending the killer. But what will the speakers have to talk of if we do just that *before* Sunday?"

"Fear not," I laughed, "they will think of something."

The *Empress of Vice*, as the women's rights movement had dubbed Mary Jeffries, was in her early seventies with a mind that showed no sign of age or softness. Her features had been assembled without an ounce of waste; thin lips, thin nose, bony cheeks and skin of a yellowing parchment. She thought of Holmes, as many did, as being of the Municipal Police. And the same police who had been her unofficial payroll right now were making her life a nightmare.

"Your former Inspector Minahan," she shouted, "may he roast on the devil's coals for dragging me and my poor girls into the dock. A woman of my age and my property being treated so!"

Holmes assured her that he was not of the police and that he had nothing to do with the current attempt to put her in jail; another outgrowth of the Booth-Stead-Butler war against the brothel owners. He went on to say, most delicately, that he had been hired by certain parties to uncover the killer of Peggy Ludden. Mary Jeffries' tough exterior softened instantly.

"Ahhhh, Peggy, Peggy, Peggy," she sobbed, "if you'd stayed with me, you'd be alive this very minute." Regaining her composure, she extended a hand to Holmes. "Whoever hired you, may they be blessed in heaven. Was it Sonia Leblanc? She lost one of her girls, too."

"I am not permitted to say, of course. You said she left you. Do you know why?"

"The holy rollers got her," she snorted. "It was coming on for months. The last few weeks, she was warning her men visitors against eternal damnation and promising them the only road to salvation. Now my girls are mostly church-goers, and I'm proud of it. But Peggy's kind of talk, well, it just wasn't right in a place dedicated to relaxation and entertainment."

"Quite," I grunted.

"Are you certain, Mrs. Jeffries, that she didn't simply leave you for another establishment?" Holmes asked.

"I am. The last day, the poor girl gave away all her 'sinning gowns,' as she called them. And divided up among the other girls every bit of money she had saved here."

"All of it? How can you be sure?"

"Because, just as she was leaving, she found one more coin and handed it to Molly Cole. 'It's my last whore's shilling,' she said."

"Then she had precisely nine pounds on her person when she left, Watson. Stead's nine pounds," Holmes mused.

"Whose nine pounds?" Jeffries said in a rising tone of anger. "Would that be William Thomas Stead, that psalm singin' bastard what loves to drive hard workin' girls to the wall?" A string of vile epithets that might

even have singed the walls of my old army barracks flew from her lips ending with, "and a hypocritical son of a bitch he is, too. For he tumbles with many a woman other than his wife. More than an ordinary womanizer, I tell you."

"Do you know this first hand about Mr. Stead?" Holmes asked softly, in an effort to calm her.

"You mean, is he a customer? No. But it was him and the Salvation Army crowd, especially that former Inspector Minahan, what dragged me into court. So I've seen Stead's smirking face more than once. And I can tell you more about a man's bedroom habits from his face than most can from any other parts."

"I don't doubt your expertise, Mrs. Jeffries. One last question, however: can you think of any *other* reason why Peggy Ludden might have left you?"

"None. My girls are quite satisfied, thank you. I take only a fair share for my expenses and services. They come to me with all their little problems. Why, I'm the only mother most of them ever knew." Suddenly she recalled something that split her face open in a proud smile.

"Now you'll see what I mean. A few weeks back, Peggy was that low. Turned out she'd missed her period. So I gave her a medicine from Dr. Mans . . . She stopped in mid-syllable. "A medicine my own doctor recommended. Three days later, she came 'round. And she was that grateful, I'll tell you."

"You're certain she was no longer pregnant?"

"Absolutely. Two day's before she left was our monthly check-up, and the doctor gave her a perfect score: No disease, no baby."

"Thank you, Mrs. Jeffries," Holmes said, shaking her hand. She stared deep into his impassive face.

"You're not a lady's man, are you? Too busy for that, eh? And maybe your nanny whacked you once or twice when she caught you lookin' at yourself in the tub, eh?"

Holmes muttered something and tried to extricate his hand. His eyes seemed a trifle glazed.

"Thank you again," Holmes mumbled, finally freeing himself.

"World's Greatest Detective," she snorted between peals of laughter that followed us out the door.

I was amazed to see Holmes wipe his palm dry on a trouser leg. For I had seen him survive many a deadly moment without moist palms or sweat-beaded lips.

"What was all that about Stead's nine Pounds?" I asked, as we started down Church Street.

"Later, Watson. First there is a little charade we must perform for Mrs. Jeffries."

He quickly outlined the details without bothering to explain the precise purpose. He often went out of his way to withhold information from me, the better to enjoy my amazement at the later disclosure.

Holmes continued on down the street while I, according to plan, returned to Mrs. Jeffries' door. She was not overjoyed to see me. And even less so when I peeled back her eyelid and clucked my concern.

"It is as I feared. I did not wish to mention it in Mr. Holmes' presence, but . . .

"Mention what, Doctor?" she gasped, irritation being quickly converted to alarm.

I continued my clucking examination. "Tell me, have you been recently visited by someone from the East Indies?"

"No. I don't like foreigners here. But there was a civil

servant from Jamaica . . ."

"Then that's it," I snapped.

"But you said the East . . ."

" . . . did I? Slip of the tongue. Meant the West Indies, of course. And this confirms that you are a victim of *Pura Prevaricatus*."

"Pura . . .?"

"Deadly 'St. Thomas Rot,' named for the island on which it was first found. If I were you, good woman, I wouldn't waste a second being treated." I turned quickly to leave.

"But you can treat me," she choked out.

"Treat you? My dear woman," I said, wiping my hands with a handkerchief and then dropping it to the floor, "I would sooner treat a case of rampant leprosy."

As the door closed behind me, I heard her heels on the stairs and her voice scream out, "Herbert! The rig! Bring it round right away! I'm a dead woman!"

By prearrangement, I joined Holmes behind a thick beech tree across the street. We watched silently as a one-horse rig pulled up to Mrs. Jeffries' door and the old girl, hair flying and clothes only half assembled, flew through the door and into the rig. As they drove off, Holmes rushed into the street to hail a hansom cab.

"Come Watson," he shouted, "the game is afoot." As we settled in, he instructed the cabby to follow Mrs. Jeffries' rig.

"What was all that about Stead's nine Pounds?"

"Two things. The odd sum that Peggy suddenly asked of Stead, of course. And the question of where she spent eight Pounds-eleven pence after she left Mrs. Jeffries' joy house. For she had only nineteen-shillings-one left, you will recall. Now, I hope to answer both questions by asking a third." He stuffed a lean cigar into his mouth in place of the pipes that he rarely carried with him.

"Tell me, good doctor, if a woman in early pregnancy desired to abort the fetus, how much must she pay?"

I did not try to hide my anger. "How the deuce would I know what some degenerate pharmacist would charge for such butchery?"

"I do not speak of a back-street abortionist. Surely in your medical-school days at London University, you and the other men must have gossiped about the prominent Harley Street doctors who practice a midnight trade, relieving unmarried women of our wealthier families of a certain abdominal embarrassment."

Reluctantly, I admitted knowledge of this dark blot on an otherwise glorious profession. "Eight Pounds. That was the price, as I recall it. And you would be astounded at some of the giant medical names I have heard connected with that loathesome practice."

Holmes leaned back, placed both hands behind his head and began thinking aloud. "If memory serves me, the following items were to be Peggy Ludden's last possessions. A half-eaten meat pie. That would indicate a brief repast in an expensive tea shop. Shall we say—thru'pence?"

"Yes, but what are you . . ."

"Next, the remains of some chocolates, a quarter pound, judging from the small sack. Tu'pence for that?"

Now I began to grasp the game. I removed my notebook and jotted down the two sums.

"The three penny streetcar ticket, of course. And, finally, the small bottle of whiskey."

"That bothers me, Holmes," I interrupted. "Why would a newly reformed woman be carrying . . ."

"I think I can make that clear, too, in a moment. What say, eight pence for the whiskey?"

"Not for that stuff," I said, my face screwed up in the bitter memory of the awful whiskey I had drunk when a penniless interne. "More like six."

"I bow to your superior knowledge of cheap whiskey, Watson. Well, what does it add up to?"

"It comes to . . ."

"One moment. Now add to that sub-total, the eighteen shillings 10 pence found on Peggy's person. And, finally, deduct that sum from Stead's original nine Pounds."

"The remaining sum is . . ." I gasped as the final figure appeared. "Eight pounds! Exactly eight Pounds missing. The woman had an abortion." Holmes sat up and nodded.

"Fact: Peggy Ludden was pregnant. Fact: Mrs. Jeffries gave her a 'remedy'—probably no more than a strong laxative—and Peggy reported herself 'cured'. But nothing is said of great bleeding and the pain that would accompany a drug abortion. So we must read Peggy's report as a lie. Fact: The Doctor gave her a clean bill of health. Then the doctor, too, must have lied. Fact: The next day, Peggy demanded nine Pounds from Stead. Conclusion? Peggy asked the doctor to abort her and he agreed, for eight Pounds. The extra Pound was to serve Peggy, who had stripped herself of her last 'whore's shilling', until she reached Mrs. Butler's Mercy House."

"Did she ever reach the doctor's office?" I wondered. "Or did the brothel syndicate's hired murderer kill her first?"

Holmes rolled his eyes in pain. "What hired killer? My dear chap, I will give you odds the girl died on the doctor's table. Did you forget the half-drunk whiskey? To prepare her for the operation. And the splinter of wood between her teeth. No toothpick, old boy!"

"Of course not," I said, wishing I had kept my mouth shut a moment before. "A stick to bite down on if the pain becomes too great. Something to reduce the midnight screams."

"Precisely. Now we must conjecture . . . The girl died on the operating table. The doctor disposed of the body. But first, to confuse the issue of the abortion, he mutilated the body so it would seem a madman's work. Unfortunately for him, his knife work was a bit too neat. No 'Mad Midwife' here, Watson. A very sane and greedy doctor."

We pulled up a block behind Mrs. Jeffries along Harley street and watched her enter one of the finest residences on that street of golden physicians. She had led us straight to our quarry.

As we rode by a moment later, I read the name on the polished brass plaque.

"Dr. Hamilton Mansfield! Good God! I studied under him at London University!"

"There is nothing to fear, Watson. Shabby ethics are not contagious." Then, to my amazement, he called out, "221-B Baker Street, driver."

"You mean you haven't enough evidence for an arrest?"

"On the contrary," he said. "The remainder probably only needs a search warrant to uncover it from Dr. Mansfield's files. But it is too soon for that." And before he could enlarge on that theme, we were at home, Dr. Mansfield being but a few blocks from Baker Street.

It was after a dinner of Norwegian lamb shanks in sour cream sauce, one of Holmes' favorites, that I reraised the issue.

"My dear Watson, you are still operating on the Stead-Booth assumption that there were two murders with a common killer. But we destroyed that when we

tricked Jeffries into leading us to Dr. Mansfield. Whoever killed Dora Stoddard was simply imitating the first mutilated corpse."

Now his tactic became clear to me. "If you arrest Mansfield, you warn the killer of Stoddard that you have seen through his murderous mimickry."

"Quite. We must play on a bit longer, leaving him or her secure in the feeling that we are looking for one mad killer of both women. However, it would be wrong not to advise Scotland Yard of our discovery."

About nine o'clock, Sgt. Conroy called at our rooms to say that the killer had contacted the Yard. A message had arrived by pneumatic tube, that marvel of the age which physically sped a message between any two parts of London in two or three minutes. The message was composed of print cut from the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"THIS IS NOT THE END. THE STREETS  
OF LONDON SHALL BE WASHED  
WITH THE BLOOD OF HARLOTS.

(signed) THE MIDWIFE."

"What would you say to that, Conroy?" Holmes asked, after studying it several minutes. "A religious fanatic?"

"Or the brothel operators imitating one, eh? I'd say they're still playing their game. They might even kill one or two more innocent whores—if you know what I mean," Conroy said, as he sipped the gin-and-it he had asked for.

"Well, Watson, since Gregson gave Conroy this message to share with us in friendly gesture . . ."

"Friendly gesture, my nose." I countered. "Gregson can't tell day-from-night on this case and he needs you, but he won't ask for your help. So he pretends to be cooperating with Stead's group and you."

Holmes smiled and nodded. "Perhaps. Nonetheless, I think we should share our find with him." And so he told Conroy of our discovery concerning the illustrious Dr. Mansfield so that the news might be carried to Gregson. The ex-policeman agreed to drop by the Yard on his way home.

"I don't know," Conroy said in the open doorway, "I kind of wish they both were done by the same one. It would cut our work in half. At least with the brothel operators we had a clear motive. Now we've wrapped up one . . . and cracked up the other." He sighed and started down the stairs singing the Gilbert and Sullivan air, "A Policeman's Lot Is Not a Happy One."

The following morning I was anxious to get started for Kensington and the questioning of Sonia Leblanc, the late Dora Stoddard's brothel employer. But Holmes hardly looked up from his kippers and toast as he said, "Sit down, Watson. From Conroy's brief biography of her, be assured that the woman lies between her satin sheets till noon or later."

"Thus it was half-past-noon when we stood before the great oak door of the mansion that was now a house of joy. The door swung half-way open shortly after my knock. Behind it stood a six-foot Sikh dressed in black blouse and trousers gathered at the ankle, crimson cloth belt and turban, and bare feet. His massive frame blocked our path as he informed us that Madame Leblanc saw no one without an appointment and urged us to leave a card and call again in two days.

Holmes barked something in a tongue I had never heard him use before. Though he had better than public school proficiency at German and all the Latin tongues, I was to learn that he knew a few phrases which com-

manded instant respect in a dozen other languages as well.

Sonia Leblanc was seated at a great piano playing a merry bit of Mozart as we entered the sunny music room. A cart containing the remains of a champagne and rarebit breakfast indicated that Holmes was quite right about her late-rising habit. She wore a rose-colored silk hostess gown and when she stood I could tell that she was not at all tall, though the trailing gown gave that illusion.

She was a woman of less than thirty with a sweet, almost child-like face, but a mature, sensuous body. Some men enjoy that combination, I am told. However, I find it uncomfortably close to the seduction of one's twelve-year-old niece.

In outlining the case to her, Holmes pretended that he still believed Stoddard and Ludden had been murdered by the brothel operators. And, without actually accusing her, he made it clear that anyone as high-up in those circles as she must have some knowledge of the conspiracy.

"No, Mr. Holmes," she said. "I have not been involved in any plot against the anti-vice movement. In fact, I welcome any investigation into London prostitution."

"How's that?" I asked. She poured some wine and handed each of us a glass.

"The kind of pressure that it would bring would only serve to close down my competitors. In two weeks of idleness—perhaps a month for the wealthier ones—they would be bankrupt. While, according to my book-keepers, I could place all my women on full-income for perhaps three years. On reopening, I would have the field clear to myself."

Holmes smiled as he twirled the stem of his wine glass. "I believe I once heard a similar statement from the owner of a great block of coal mines."

The woman laughed a tinkling laugh. "Why not, dear sir? All business operates by the same principles." And then she grew more serious. "However, I have a more personal reason for favoring the women's movement. I am just as interested in female equality as Mrs. Butler. Though I may not live to see it, I look forward to the day when every prostitute can be a Duchess and every Duchess can play the whore. And I'm not sure which of them will benefit the more." The tinkling laugh sounded again.

"Interesting sentiments," Holmes said.

"It is more than sentiment. I have put my money where my heart is. If you swear to me that you will never repeat this to her, I will tell you a deep secret about Mrs. Butler's funds for the moment." Holmes nodded agreement. "For several years now, I have been her major benefactor in the form of monthly money orders from a Mrs. Noble Deeds."

Holmes far more enjoyed that little joke than did I. "So the cash that runs the women's movement comes from the fanciest brothel in the city. Delightful . . . However, don't you concern yourself with the possibility that this growing mass protest may finally harm you? Physically, I mean."

"An attack upon my house, I assume you mean? Yes, I see that as a distinct possibility. Especially with the Salvation Army involved now. They attract violence, those Hallelujah Lassies. However, I have a direct line to their activities. Never fear, I know each move before they make it!"

It was clear she meant to say no more about that, and Holmes was too wise to waste time trying to

dissuade her. Now he centered his questions on the Stoddard woman. As it turned out, Dora was hardly an active prostitute in her last few years. She had been brought down from the countryside by Mrs. White, Sonia's mother, at age fourteen, twenty years ago. She proved quite popular, being both pretty and daring. When Sonia took charge, she offered to invest Stoddard's money in real estate or government bonds. The girl refused and, eventually, found herself not only penniless, but with her most basic asset, her beauty, squandered as well.

"A few customers still requested her now and then, for old times sake. But I kept her on more in the nature of an assistant. She was well acquainted with the habits of the other girls and knew everything that went on among them."

"You might say she was a spy," Holmes commented.

"You might say that," she frowned.

"In which case, we could be dealing with a two-edged sword, dear lady. If she spied for you, she might also have spied against you. Your secret contributions to the women's movement, for example . . ."

"She knew nothing of those. Only Singh, the servant who admitted you, only he knew of it. If you are trying to make it appear that I killed Dora to silence her, that is ridiculous."

Holmes shrugged. "In my work, one must travel a few steps up every road that presents itself." He got up to leave. As he passed the piano, he took out a pencil and made a light check mark on the Mozart manuscript. "You are slurring that arpeggio, Madame. It's really worth an extra effort not to."

Singh saw us to the door silently and, when Holmes rested his fingers on a well-oiled walnut table, the Sikh frowned and wiped away the possible marks with a cloth. Holmes smiled. "I say, Singh," he remarked in the doorway, "among your other duties, you didn't happen to murder Dora Stoddard the other evening, did you?" The Sikh whispered some angry syllables and Holmes nodded. "I didn't think so. But there's no harm in asking." It was as close to a display of humour as I had ever seen in the dedicated detective.

We were awakened the following morning, Saturday, by the sound of a band in the street. "Some sort of a demonstration," I remarked as we stared out the window. Holmes squinted down.

"The first contingent of the Hyde Park rally, remember? This will be going on all day, I assume. The papers say they are expecting 10,000 or more. I had hoped we would have a killer to offer as our contribution." He was clearly depressed.

"And so we have. Dr. Mansfield, you know," I reminded him.

"Yes, but Conroy was to tell Gregson to hold off on that until we had the second case in hand. Now I am not at all sure when we can claim that."

There was a knock at the door and an aging messenger presented Holmes with a telegram. He waited while we read it.

"URGENT I SEE YOU AFTER HYDE PARK  
RALLY (STOP) MEET ME 4 O'CLOCK  
FAMILY ENTRANCE ROSE-AND-SWAN  
PUB (STOP) LEBLANC"

"No reply," Holmes said, as he handed a coin to the departing messenger. "So, Watson, Madame Leblanc *does* have something to tell us."

"Not a confession?"

"I quite agree. She is too clever for a needless killing. Her money could have stopped Dora's tongue bloodlessly, if it came to that. However, she seems to know something of substance. Once I mentioned the possibility . . . He stopped in mid-sentence to listen to a heavy tread coming up our stairs. "Wait a moment and we can let an old friend in on this discussion." He reached for the doorknob and called out, "Come in, Gregson," even before opening the door.

Inspector Gregson stood there, thin, mustached and a trifle befuddled, with a hand raised in knocking position. "I say, Holmes, those ears of yours are as good as any hunting dog's."

"Come in, dear fellow. I believe we've just had a stroke of luck on this case."

"Good" Gregson sighed, lowering himself onto our sofa. "We could use it."

Quickly, Holmes recounted our visit to Sonia Leblanc. "And apparently," he said in summing up, "when I raised the idea that she might have killed Dora for spying and perhaps blackmailing her, it opened a whole realm of possibilities for her."

"How's that?" Gregson asked.

"Well, like ourselves, she undoubtedly thought the two deaths were related and both the work of her colleagues in the brothel trade. But once I had separated Dora's killing in her mind, she recognized some

## DOYLOGUES



"A child must have done this terrible thing, Holmes!"

kind of information that had previously meant nothing to her."

"How's that?" Gregson asked again. He really seemed more obtuse than usual. "What do you mean you separated the two killings? The theory that Stead and Booth have about the brothel syndicate engineering both deaths still makes perfect sense."

"But surely after what we discovered concerning Peggy Ludden's abortion. . ." I began.

"What abortion?" Gregson yelled.

"Why, the matter of Dr. Mansfield of Harley Street and. . ." But now it was Holmes' turn to interrupt me. He was grim.

"Inspector, are you telling us that Sgt. Conroy did not deliver my message to you concerning the murderer of Peggy Ludden?"

"I haven't seen Conroy in two days. He's probably sitting up with the two corpses, loyal bird-dog that he is. Now suppose you tell me what this is all about, Holmes."

But there was obviously no time for that. Holmes whipped off his dressing gown as he headed for his bedroom. "Quickly, Watson! If our Mad Midwife strikes again, it may well be at Hyde Park this very day."

The cab ride to Hyde Park was a swaying, jostling run. The horses were spurred forward by the driver's whip and the driver by the Pound note Holmes had offered as reward.

"Tell me all you know about Conroy," Holmes demanded of Gregson. The Inspector held tight to a passenger strap to keep from flying from his seat as he grunted out his information.

"Better than most policemen. . .until he decided to turn against us and join the anti-vice crowd. That's not how you fight. . ."

"The details, I beg of you, Gregson. We've no time!"

"Came from a family of policemen. Good record. Got a citation for capturing a rapist over in White Chapel by walking the streets at night dressed as a woman. Had an army decoration, too."

"Army? What unit? Where did he serve?"

"Southern Africa. In a skirmish with the Boers, they say he carried two wounded men to safety under fire. He was a nurse, you know." Before Florence Nightingale's trainees, all Army nurses were men, of course.

"Yes! Yes!" Holmes cried. "Worked around the surgery, too, I'll wager. Learned a little scalpel technique." Then, without further urging, he disclosed everything. "Sonia Leblanc told us that she had a spy within the anti-vice movement. Now recall, Watson, how precise Conroy's biography of her was. Yet he had never served in her district. Conroy was her spy, I'm certain. Handsomely paid, as all who work for Leblanc doubtless are. And the fact that the two had never met until the day he secretly broached the matter to Leblanc offered much safety.

"But Conroy had not counted on the prying Dora Stoddard. Let us say that she met him secretly and threatened to expose his double role to Mrs. Butler and the Salvation Army crowd. He would have agreed, arranged for a second meeting to pay her. . ."

". . .and then killed her," I said. After that, using his primitive knowledge of surgery, he crudely imitated the first mutilation."

"When I told Conroy we had separated the two mur-

ders," Holmes continued, "he saw the danger: a danger that had to be removed before all of Scotland Yard would begin rethinking the second murder."

"That's why he never delivered your message to me," Gregson said.

"But there was only one point of danger left—Leblanc herself. Now, if she had planned to attend this rally days ago, Conroy would doubtless know it. And he will use this opportunity to strike again. Ahhhh, here we are, gentlemen. I hope you are both armed. You can be sure that Conroy is."

Hyde Park was bursting with humanity. Some nine separate parades had been converging there all day from different sectors of the city. Thirty-four bands, by the next day's newspaper accounts, filled the air with sprightly marches and the happy hymns the Army employed. It was the strangest mixture of triumph and despair. They were celebrating their victory in Parliament in extending the age of sexual consent. But they were also mourning the "martyrs"—Dora and Peggy. Half the crowd wore white arm bands for the dead women.

Gregson gathered half-a-hundred bobbies about him and quickly instructed them to search out Conroy in the crowd. At that same moment, Holmes took me aside.

"Conroy's victim may be easier to find than the Sergeant," he said. "Since I am convinced she will be accompanied by her Sikh servant."

"Right you are, Holmes. Especially since she must now feel endangered. And where the woman is, Conroy will not be far off."

We began moving through the various crowds that were assembled around the many speakers platforms. The host of speakers took turns moving from platform to platform so that all could eventually hear them. Bernard Shaw was there. And the crowds followed him from one stand to the next, certain of a few clever remarks. I stopped long enough to hear one exchange.

"There are those even among our supporters who think of the Doras and Peggys as being 'fallen women'. Well, let me say that there is no woman as fallen as the Bloomsbury housewives who, night after night, offer themselves to husbands they despise for the sake of security and the legitimacy of their children."

"Come on, Bernard Shaw," a man cried from the crowd, "this is an anti-vice rally, not a socialist meeting."

"You would prefer I kept politics out of morality?" Shaw twinkled. "Well, why not? We've always managed to keep morality out of politics."

Oscar Wilde was there too, fresh from a tour of America which he was perfectly willing to describe to the crowd as "triumphant."

"When the American customs agents stopped me on the pier, I said, I have nothing to declare but my genius!"

When some member of the crowd, doubtless enraged by Wilde's velvet pants, lace shirt and shoulder-length hair, shouted an ugly epithet and hurled a tomato that missed Wilde by a wide margin, the poet laughed. "I see that your aim is no better than your intellect!"

There was more, much more. But Holmes and I were too busy scouring the crowds to observe much of it.

Suddenly I felt Holmes' hand at my sleeve. He pointed toward one of the meetings being addressed by General Booth. There, in the middle of the crowd, was the turbaned head of the great Sikh. I started forward and Holmes restrained me.

"We must watch from a distance. The moment that Conroy tries to approach them, we have our man."

It must have been a good half-hour that we stood there waiting for the man to show. Then, quite suddenly, a fight broke out at another meeting. The *Skeleton Army*, groups of hooligans hired by pub owners and brothel keepers to attack Salvation Army meetings, was clearly in evidence. They traveled under skull-and-crossbones flags to counter the crimson banners of the Army. They had accounted for some 2,000 wounded Salvation Army supporters since its inception.

It was a very one-sided skirmish, as all those battles were. For the Salvation Army rarely fought back. It was against their religious principles. I had a burning urge to join them, but Holmes swiftly dissuaded me with an elbow to the ribs. He pointed at General Booth's meeting which was rapidly thinning out as they rushed toward the scene of battle. Now Singh and his mistress could be clearly seen. But they were quite alone, except for an aging lady who stood listening, her hands firmly folded behind her back.

"It looks as though Conroy is not going to be here," I whispered to Holmes.

"Look again," he shouted as he began a dog trot toward the General's meeting.

I did look again, even as I began trotting behind him. Still I saw nothing except Leblanc and her Sikh, plus the old lady with the clasped hands.

"The Constable's Clasp!" Holmes shouted back at me. Of course. Conroy's citation for impersonating a rape target. That old lady was the Sergeant.

"She" caught sight of us perhaps thirty feet away. The Sergeant's hands flew from behind his back and something long and metallic glinted in one of them. A scalpel.

Holmes halted and braced himself for the rush he knew must come. In a moment the disguised Conroy was nearly on top of him. Holmes feinted to one side and Conroy's knife arm found nothing but air. Then, employing the Japanese martial arts that he had long studied, Holmes grasped Conroy's arm and flung him over his back. The Sergeant, his woman's bonnet hanging from his neck now, was on his feet quickly. He decided that he had a better chance in flight than fight. But before he had run a dozen steps, he discovered the great figure of Singh barring his path.

Conroy rushed straight at the Sikh, knife extended. Singh made no attempt to dodge the thrust. Instead, he embraced it. Conroy cried out against the steel-like hug, and his head snapped back as he stared up at the wounded Sikh in bewilderment. In a moment, Conroy's head lolled to one side and it was apparent that he had been crushed to death. Sikh and Sergeant fell slowly to the ground together, the blood from the knife wound soaking both their bodies.

Holmes and I put the ashen Sonia Leblanc into a cab while Gregson and his men went about the nasty details of their trade. Bramwell Booth led a group of Salvation Army members in a kneeling prayer for the

souls of all those "who have died in this ugly business of sin. For even those who have fallen here this day are victims of the brothel barons."

"The Sikh was a victim, yes," I said to Holmes later. "But certainly not the murderous Conroy."

"Only in the sense that we are all victims," he said. "A fact that becomes abundantly clear to us at a very tender age—on that first day when you gain an enemy, or lose a friend."

<sup>1</sup>Those of you who have read the Doctor's earlier chronicles will recall that it was at the Holborne luncheon where Stamford, Watson's "dresser," or surgical assistant, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, first spoke the name of Sherlock Holmes to him.

<sup>2</sup>History tells us that Nightingale arrived too late for this Crimean battle. Apparently, newspapers in Dr. Watson's time were no more accurate than they are today. (Editor)



## DOYLOGUES



*"I think there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch, and which therefore, to some extent, justify private revenge."*



# A Visit From A Stranger



(Continued from page 36)

"And what was that?"

"There must be only one person in the flat. Can you imagine how I felt at that stage? I thought it would end long before. Still, there's another condition. And its the most foolproof of them all."

They looked at each other. Jill knew what he was inviting her to ask. She also knew that she shouldn't do it. She shouldn't cooperate with this lunacy. She tried to think of some bright, irrelevant remark. But none came to her. A moment later, she was surprised to hear herself ask:

"What is it?"

"Hm?"

Jill stood up and, as she did so, noticed that Reid's body tensed slightly. She glanced wistfully towards the hall but she actually turned towards the window. She said irritably:

"Well, what is it? What's your final insane condition?"

A look of concern instantly appeared on Reid's face.

"Mrs. Groome, I do hope I haven't upset you. You see—"

But Jill cut him off in a voice that was still controlled but which held strains of both fury and hysteria.

"Oh, for God's sake, tell me!"

"It's the bedroom."

"What about the bedroom?"

"The occupant had to have decorated the bedroom in a certain color. Now, of course, you told me that you decorated it but it's the color that provided the safeguard."

Jill felt her throat tighten. She was aware of a sudden, acute thirst. She took a sip of her martini.

"What color?"

"Red."

"Red?"

"Yes, the condition would be positive if the person had painted or papered the walls red."

Jill moved slowly to the window. She gazed out at the huge, inviting spread of London. She asked:

"Suppose the walls were patterned?"

"Then it would be negative. The walls had to be painted or papered in solid red."

"All of them?"

"Yes."

Jill turned back towards Gordon. A high laugh, almost merry, issued from her throat.

"Red! Red walls! No one would paint their bedroom walls solid red. It would look ghastly."

He said excitedly:

"Of course. Of course, it would! That's why I chose it! Good Lord, you don't think I wanted to murder someone! Not that I could, of course. Good Lord, no! You surely realize, Mrs. Groome, that I've been telling you about the callow and objectionable youth I once was—not the man I am now."

Jill seized the opportunity.

"Of course, I do. I realize that. But it's a very bizarre story. It has upset me. So I would be grateful if you'd go now, Mr. Reid."

He didn't move for a moment. Then he smiled apologetically and rose.

"Immediately. I only told you all that nonsense because you seemed interested. I certainly didn't want to upset you. Well, goodbye, Mrs. Groome."

He turned and moved towards the hall and, inevitably, the bedroom door. When he was level with the latter, he paused and turned back.

"By the way, what color did you paint the bedroom walls?"

"Green," said Jill firmly. "Very pale green."

Gordon Reid nodded.

"Green? I see."

He put his hand on the bedroom door handle. He asked affably:

"Do you mind if I take a quick peek?"

"No!" protested Jill. She ran a few steps towards him. "You mustn't! Can't you see how important it is that you don't?"

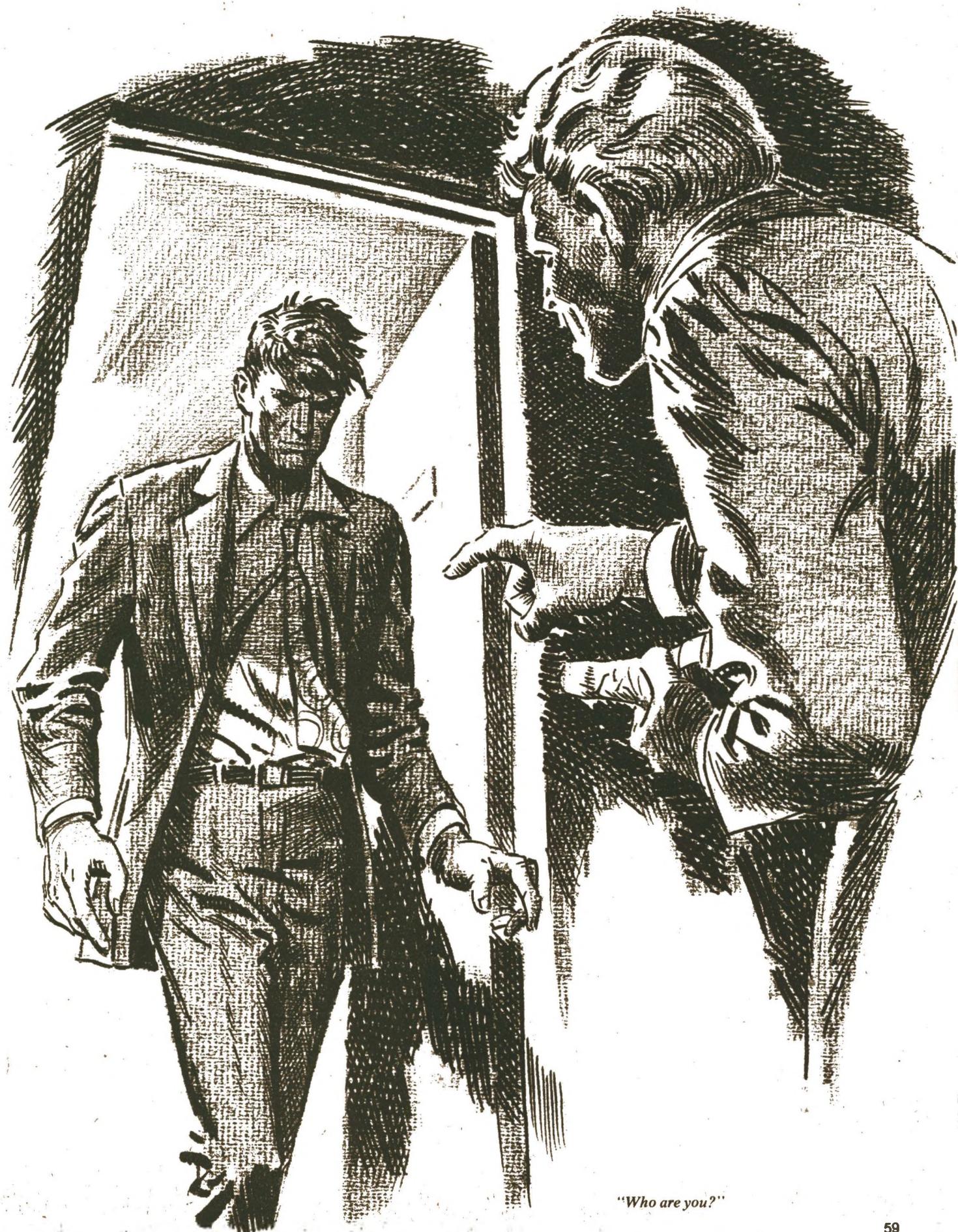
Reid shook his head and frowned slightly.

"Why is it important?"

"Oh, think about it. You say you've grown out of your obsession. But if you look, you'll wonder for the rest of your life what you might have done if the walls had been red. Mr. Reid—Gordon!—this is your chance to free yourself. Walk out of the front door, and you'll be rid of this nightmare forever."

He nodded agreement.

"I'm sure you're right. But you know it's odd—odd that you should have painted the walls green."



*"Who are you?"*

He smiled his little boy smile. "Green is the opposite of red."

He still had his hand on the bedroom door handle. Jill approached him closely. She found that she was breathing hard, as if she'd been running.

"Alright," she gasped, "you won't let me help you. So I'm going to show you. And once I've done that you'll never be certain as to what you might have done. But I can't stand this any more, so I will show you."

Gordon stepped back to allow her to open the bedroom door. But instead she twisted past him and made a rush for the hall and the front door. He moved with astounding speed. By the time she had seized the handle, his back was against the door. She gave a cry. He said urgently but soothingly:

"Please, please, Jill. May I call you Jill?"

"Oh God!"

She turned and ran back into the living room. She threw herself down into her chair and covered her face with her hands. She was no longer angry. Now she was scared—scared as she had never been before. She realized that Gordon Reid was once more seated opposite her. He was speaking again:

"Jill, try to understand. A long time ago, I made what you might call a psychological experiment. And it worked. I achieved a sense of power—a confidence—which has helped me in everything. Now how can I repudiate the vow I made at that time without repudiating myself—without denying my very existence?"

She swallowed.

"But you're talking about murder."

He shuddered. He paled. He was not pretending. The idea appalled him nearly as much as it did her. Jill was a woman of strong personality. She drew herself up and said loudly:

"Well aren't you? If I had painted my walls red and you had seen them, you would have had to kill me, wouldn't you? Well, how? Have you brought a gun?"

He looked up at her startled.

"I've never even held a gun."

"Well, killing people is a concrete and messy business, Gordon. It's not, as you seem to think, an amusing indoor sport for philosophers. So tell me, how did you intend to do it?"

He shook his head helplessly. He looked pathetic, like a child who can't think of an excuse for some naughty act. Jill pressed her advantage.

"Perhaps I can help. I've got sharp knives in the kitchen. I could lend you one. But they're not as abstract as guns, Gordon. With a knife you feel the resistance of the flesh and perhaps the bone too. You have to get close to your victim and you're bound to get blood on you. How would you feel about that, Gordon?"

It was his turn to cover his eyes. He moaned:

"Ghastly! Ghastly!"

Jill knew that she was winning. She said reproachfully but also maternally:

"Of course, it is. You come knocking on the door of a complete stranger—who's done you no manner of harm—with murder in your heart because of an adolescent phantasy you once amused yourself with. Well, suppose you had opened the bedroom door, Gordon? Suppose the walls had been red? What would you have done, strangled me?"

He shook his head violently.

"I couldn't. I couldn't."

Jill waited a deliberate moment. Then she said in a firm but kindly voice.

"Well, that's the answer, isn't it? You're simply not a killer."

He uncovered his eyes. He looked up at her pleadingly.

"I'm not, am I, Jill? I'm not a killer, am I?"

Confident now, she went so far as to reach out and pat his arm.

"You're not, Gordon. But you really should see someone. I know you're a psychologist yourself but—"

He interrupted eagerly.

"That's it, I need help, perhaps treatment. I'll get it. I will—I promise."

"Yes," she stood up. "I think you'd better go now, Gordon."

He got to his feet. He looked at her timidly.

"When I'm gone will you phone the police?"

Jill smiled.

"Why? To tell them I've had a long talk with someone who once lived in my flat? Good-bye, Gordon."

She held out her hand. He took it briefly. Then he turned towards the hall, saying:

"Good-bye, Jill. I'm grateful—really grateful."

She watched him as he moved towards the hall. Suddenly she gasped and cried:

"No, Gordon! That's the wrong door! Don't—"

But it was too late. Whether from confusion, or from confused but still potent intention, Gordon had pulled open the bedroom door. He stood transfixed, gazing at the red glow that issued from the solid pillar-box red of all four walls. Jill gasped and her hand went involuntarily to her breast. Then she backed stealthily towards the window. Slowly the sick man turned. He murmured:

"You lied to me."

"No," she babbled, "I didn't, Gordon. It's just an accident that they're red. It doesn't come into your plan. You see I meant to paint them green—very pale green—to match the bed cover. Look at the bed cover, Gordon. Its pale green. My mother gave me that bed cover. It clashes horribly with the walls. It looks terrible in there."

He shook his head peevishly. He said:

"There's nothing in the plan about bed covers. It's the walls."

She pleaded:

"But I hate those red walls. It was a kind of accident. My friend, Stella, happened to be here. She loves violent colors and she urged me to paint them red. I don't know why I did. I've been meaning to repaint them ever since. It's impossible, that color—it's quite impossible."

He frowned. He murmured, hardly aware of her any longer:

"All the conditions—every one of them—positive."

Now she shouted at him, with a blend of fear and anger making her voice harsh:

"Oh, don't be stupid, Gordon! You can't murder someone because of the color of their walls."

He looked at her again. He explained patiently:

"It's not a punishment, Jill, as I've tried to explain. It's got nothing to do with you really. It's me. I am a hostage to fate. The ransom must be paid. Do you understand now?"

She could feel her face working, her lips trembling.

God, how she loathed this lethal imbecile. She would have liked to stamp on him, to annihilate him like the cockroach she had found in her kitchen the other day. But she was physically no match for him. She spat out:

"They'll get you. The police will get you."

He smiled sadly.

"They won't have to, Jill. You see, I shall go to them when it's done. I'm not a criminal."

She stared at him, her mind reeling. Only now did she begin to perceive the vertiginous depths of his black ecstasy. But she fought it. She tried again with reason.

"Do you know what they'll do to you, Gordon? They'll lock you up in a little stone room. They'll lock you in there forever."

Pain rippled across his features.

"It will be terrible—terrible. I hate to be shut in. Why I even leave my office every so often for a short walk because I hate it so."

"Then—for God's sake—don't do it!"

He failed to understand her.

"Don't go to the police?"

"Don't do this insane, ghastly thing. Gordon, walk out the door. Go back to Birmingham. I won't tell anyone—I swear I won't. And I'll move out of this flat. Oh, I couldn't stay here after this. But go, Gordon, go!"

He shook his head mournfully.

"If only I could."

"But why can't you? Why can't you?"

"You're not thinking, Jill. As you pointed out, I face a hellish ordeal. Now what does a thing like that do to a man? It may destroy him but it may also raise him to spiritual greatness."

He rose and moved towards her, his eyes blazing with mystic aspiration.

"Don't you see, Jill? Don't you see what all this may be about—the creation of a saint?"

She gave a cry and burst into tears. Through her sobs she stammered:

"Oh, you're crazy. You're really—really—crazy."

Then, drowning, she grasped at a straw:

"But you can't—you can't do it, Gordon. Remember? You're not a killer—we both agreed—you're just not a killer."

He frowned unhappily. He said:

"But I must be. Don't you see? That's the test. To see if I'm worthy. I must do it. I must."

She urged desperately.

"You haven't a gun! You couldn't use a knife. The spurting blood Gordon—think of the spurting blood."

He cringed but the problem now held him. He gazed about the opulent little flat for inspiration. He murmured:

"There must be a way."

"Not for you, Gordon. You're a gentle person. It's just not in you. You've got to believe that, Gordon. It's not in you."

But he was no longer listening. He was staring at something, apparently at the shelf where Jill kept her few, but choice, ornaments. He exclaimed with delighted relief:

"Kali, Jill! Had you forgotten? Kali is here. Kali the destroyer—and the lifegiver."

He went to the shelf. He picked up the heavy, bronze statuette. He turned back to Jill. Now he was

smiling. He looked full of confidence.

"Kali will help us, Jill. I can do it with her help."

She shrank back into the corner by the window. Beside her the whole of bright London called. And now, for the first time, she doubted that she would walk its streets again. The crazed fanatic, still wearing his intent, boyish smile, advanced on her slowly. She knew what she ought to do: jump at him, frighten him, hope that she might at least hurt him enough for her to make a final dash. And she knew that she couldn't. She had become merely a figment of his dark dream. When he struck, she would succumb. Now he was only a few paces away. Slowly, as he took the last few steps, he raised the crushing bronze. Jill gazed up and saw the head of the goddess ringed with skulls. Gordon breathed:

"Now, Jill! Now, we'll change the world!"

Jill screamed once, a brief animal shriek, and—the doorbell rang. An age beyond time went past. Then, faintly, Jill heard Gordon's voice muttering:

"Doorbell? Doorbell?—there's something—something—in the plan—"

He put down the bronze statuette. He took out his old pocket diary and ruffled thorough it as if checking for a forgotten appointment. He frowned and read:

"If the doorbell or telephone rings before the act has been accomplished, the Plan shall be held to be cancelled."

He shook his head ruefully. He smiled at the cowering, whimpering woman and explained:

"I'm terribly sorry, Jill. There's another condition. I'd forgotten that one. It looks like we've been wrong. It can't have been my summons after all. Goodnight, Jill. I'll let whoever it is in."

He turned and strode briskly to the front door. From another world—a world of living beings that no longer seemed to include her—Jill heard the exchange that followed.

"Who are you?" asked Jimmy Stone.

"I'm Gordon Reid. I used to live here—a long time ago."

"Is that so?"

Jill realized, with surprise, that she could still tell that Jimmy was a little drunk.

"Well, where's Jill? And why were you so long coming to the door?"

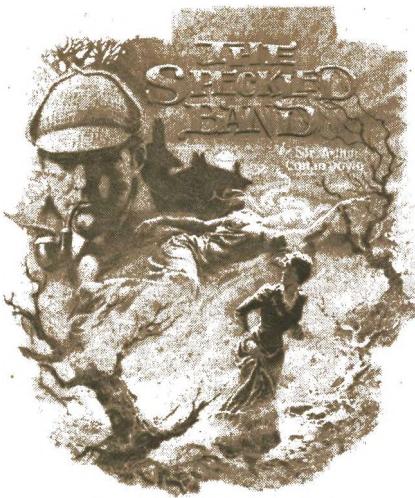
"Jill's inside. She'll explain. We've had a most stimulating evening. Good night."

Then she heard the demon's footsteps moving away down the corridor. She gazed towards her own hall and, through a mist, saw the familiar form of her errant lover moving towards her. He had a bottle of champagne under his arm.

At the first glimpse of his mistress, Jimmy Stone gasped. Then he hurried unsteadily towards her.

"Jill! My God! Jill, what's happened? Was it him? What's he done to you? Jill, answer me, for God's sake. Jill, are you alright? Jill, please say something!"





(Continued from page 30)

nose, gave him somewhat the resemblance of a fierce old bird of prey.

"Which of you is Holmes?" asked this apparition.

"My name, sir; but you have the advantage of me," said my companion quietly.

"I am Dr. Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran."

"Indeed, Doctor," said Holmes blandly. "Pray take a seat."

"I will do nothing of the kind. My stepdaughter has been here. I have traced her. What has she been saying to you?"

"It is a little cold for the time of the year," said Holmes.

"What has she been saying to you?" screamed the old man furiously.

"But I have heard that the crocuses promise well," continued my companion imperturbably.

"Ha! You put me off, do you?" said our new visitor, taking a step forward and shaking his hunting-crop. "I know you, you scoundrel! I have heard of you before. You are Holmes, the meddler."

My friend smiled.

"Holmes, the busybody!"

His smile broadened.

"Holmes, the Scotland Yard Jack-in-office!"

Holmes chuckled heartily. "Your conversation is most entertaining," said he. "When you go out close the door, for there is a decided draught."

"I will go when I have said my say. Don't you dare to meddle with my affairs. I know that Miss Stoner has been here. I traced her! I am a dangerous man to fall foul of! See here." He stepped swiftly forward, seized the poker, and bent it into a curve with his huge brown hands.

"See that you keep yourself out of my grip," he snarled, and hurling the twisted poker into the fireplace he strode out of the room.

"He seems a very amiable person," said Holmes, laughing. "I am not quite so bulky, but if he had remained I might have shown him that my grip was not much more feeble than his own." As he spoke he picked up the steel poker and, with a sudden effort, straightened it out again.

"Fancy his having the insolence to confound me with the official detective force! This incident gives zest to our investigation, however, and I only trust that our little friend will not suffer from her imprudence in allowing this brute to trace her. And now, Watson, we shall order breakfast, and afterwards I shall walk down to

Doctors' Commons, where I hope to get some data which may help us in this matter."

It was nearly one o'clock when Sherlock Holmes returned from his excursion. He held in his hand a sheet of blue paper, scrawled over with notes and figures.

"I have seen the will of the deceased wife," said he. "To determine its exact meaning I have been obliged to work out the present prices of the investments with which it is concerned. The total income, which at the time of the wife's death was little short of £ 1100, is now, through the fall in agricultural prices, not more than £ 750. Each daughter can claim an income of £ 250, in case of marriage. It is evident, therefore, that if both girls had married, this beauty would have had a mere pittance, while even one of them would cripple him to a very serious extent. My morning's work has not been wasted, since it has proved that he has the very strongest motives for standing in the way of anything of the sort. And now, Watson, this is too serious for dawdling, especially as the old man is aware that we are interesting ourselves in his affairs; so if you are ready, we shall call a cab and drive to Waterloo. I should be very much obliged if you would slip your revolver into your pocket. An Eley's No. 2 is an excellent argument with gentlemen who can twist steel pokers into knots. That and a tooth-brush are, I think, all that we need."

At Waterloo we were fortunate in catching a train for Leatherhead, where we hired a trap at the station inn and drove for four or five miles through the lovely Surrey lanes. It was a perfect day, with a bright sun and a few fleecy clouds in the heavens. The trees and wayside hedges were just throwing out their first green shoots, and the air was full of the pleasant smell of the moist earth. To me at least there was a strange contrast between the sweet promise of the spring and this sinister quest upon which we were engaged. My companion sat in the front of the trap, his arms folded, his hat pulled down over his eyes, and his chin sunk upon his breast, buried in the deepest thought. Suddenly, however, he started, tapped me on the shoulder, and pointed over the meadows.

"Look there!" said he.

A heavily timbered park stretched up in a gentle slope, thickening into a grove at the highest point. From amid the branches there jutted out the gray gables and high roof-tree of a very old mansion.

"Stoke Moran?" said he.

"Yes, sir, that be the house of Dr. Grimesby Roylott," remarked the driver.

"There is some building going on there," said Holmes; "that is where we are going."

"There's the village," said the driver, pointing to a cluster of roofs some distance to the left; "but if you want to get to the house, you'll find it shorter to get over this stile, and so by the foot-path over the fields. There it is, where the lady is walking."

"And the lady, I fancy, is Miss Stoner," observed Holmes, shading his eyes. "Yes, I think we had better do as you suggest."

We got off, paid our fare, and the trap rattled back on its way to Leatherhead.

"I thought it as well," said Holmes as we climbed the stile, "that this fellow should think we had come here as architects, or on some definite business. It may stop his gossip. Good-afternoon, Miss Stoner. You see that we have been as good as our word."



*"Well, look at this."*

Our client of the morning had hurried forward to meet us with a face which spoke her joy. "I have been waiting so eagerly for you," she cried, shaking hands with us warmly. "All has turned out splendidly. Dr. Roylott has gone to town, and it is unlikely that he will be back before evening."

"We have had the pleasure of making the doctor's acquaintance," said Holmes, and in a few words he sketched out what had occurred. Miss Stoner turned white to the lips as she listened.

"Good heavens!" she cried, "he has followed me, then."

"So it appears."

"He is so cunning that I never know when I am safe from him. What will he say when he returns?"

"He must guard himself, for he may find that there is someone more cunning than himself upon his track. You must lock yourself up from him to-night. If he is violent, we shall take you away to your aunt's at Harrow. Now, we must make the best use of our time, so kindly take us at once to the rooms which we are to examine."

The building was of gray, lichen-blotched stone, with a high central portion and two curving wings, like the claws of a crab, thrown out on each side. In one of these wings the windows were broken and blocked with wooden boards, while the roof was partly caved in, a picture of ruin. The central portion was in little better repair, but the right-hand block was comparatively modern, and the blinds in the windows, with the blue smoke curling up from the chimneys, showed that this was where the family resided. Some scaffolding had been erected against the end wall, and the stone-work had been broken into, but there were no signs of any workmen at the moment of our visit. Holmes walked slowly up and down the ill-trimmed lawn and examined with deep attention the outsides of the windows.

"This, I take it, belongs to the room in which you used to sleep, the centre one to your sister's, and the one next to the main building to Dr. Roylott's chamber?"

"Exactly so. But I am now sleeping in the middle one."

"Pending the alterations, as I understand. By the way, there does not seem to be any very pressing need for repairs at that end wall."

"There were none. I believe that it was an excuse to move me from my room."

"Ah! that is suggestive. Now, on the other side of this narrow wing runs the corridor from which these three rooms open. There are windows in it, of course?"

"Yes, but very small ones. Too narrow for anyone to pass through."

"As you both locked your doors at night, your rooms were unapproachable from that side. Now, would you have the kindness to go into your room and bar your shutters?"

Miss Stoner did so, and Holmes, after a careful examination through the open window, endeavoured in every way to force the shutter open, but without success. There was no slit through which a knife could be passed to raise the bar. Then with his lens he tested the hinges, but they were of solid iron, built firmly into the massive masonry. "Hum!" said he, scratching his chin in some perplexity, "my theory certainly presents some difficulties. No one could pass these shutters if they were bolted. Well, we shall see if the inside throws any light upon the matter."

A small side door led into the whitewashed corridor from which the three bedrooms opened. Holmes refused

to examine the third chamber, so we passed at once to the second, that in which Miss Stoner was now sleeping, and in which her sister had met with her fate. It was a homely little room, with a low ceiling and a gaping fireplace, after the fashion of old country-houses. A brown chest of drawers stood in one corner, a narrow white-counterpaned bed in another, and a dressing-table on the left-hand side of the window. These articles, with two small wicker-work chairs, made up all the furniture in the room save for a square of Wilton carpet in the centre. The boards round and the panelling of the walls were of brown, worm-eaten oak, so old and discoloured that it may have dated from the original building of the house. Holmes drew one of the chairs into a corner and sat silent, while his eyes travelled round and round and up and down, taking in every detail of the apartment.

"Where does that bell communicate with?" he asked at last, pointing to a thick bell-rope which hung down beside the bed, the tassel actually lying upon the pillow.

"It goes to the housekeeper's room."

"It looks newer than the other things?"

"Yes, it was only put there a couple of years ago."

"Your sister asked for it, I suppose?"

"No, I never heard of her using it. We used always to get what we wanted for ourselves."

"Indeed, it seemed unnecessary to put so nice a bell-pull there. You will excuse me for a few minutes while I satisfy myself as to this floor." He threw himself down upon his face with his lens in his hand and crawled swiftly backward and forward, examining minutely the cracks between the boards. Then he did the same with the wood-work with which the chamber was panelled. Finally he walked over to the bed and spent some time in staring at it and in running his eye up and down the wall. Finally he took the bell-rope in his hand and gave it a brisk tug.

"Why, it's a dummy," said he.

"Won't it ring?"

"No, it is not even attached to a wire. This is very interesting. You can see now that it is fastened to a hook just above where the little opening for the ventilator is."

"How very absurd! I never noticed that before."

"Very strange!" muttered Holmes, pulling at the rope. "There are one or two very singular points about this room. For example, what a fool a builder must be to open a ventilator into another room, when, with the same trouble, he might have communicated with the outside air!"

"That is also quite modern," said the lady.

"Done about the same time as the bell-rope?" remarked Holmes.

"Yes, there were several little changes carried out about that time."

"They seem to have been of a most interesting character—dummy bell-ropes, and ventilators which do not ventilate. With your permission, Miss Stoner, we shall now carry our researches into the inner apartment."

Dr. Grimesby Roylott's chamber was larger than that of his stepdaughter, but was as plainly furnished. A camp-bed, a small wooden shelf full of books, mostly of a technical character, an armchair beside the bed, a plain wooden chair against the wall, a round table, and a large iron safe were the principal things which met the eye. Holmes walked slowly round and examined each and all of them with the keenest interest.

"What's in here?" he asked, tapping the safe.

"My stepfather's business papers."

"Oh! you have seen inside, then?"

"Only once, some years ago. I remember that it was full of papers."

"There isn't a cat in it, for example?"

"No. What a strange idea!"

"Well, look at this!" He took up a small saucer of milk which stood on the top of it.

"No; we don't keep a cat. But there is a cheetah and a baboon."

"Ah, yes, of course! Well, a cheetah is just a big cat, and yet a saucer of milk does not go very far in satisfying its wants, I daresay. There is one point which I should wish to determine." He squatted down in front of the wooden chair and examined the seat of it with the greatest attention.

"Thank you. That is quite settled," said he, rising and putting his lens in his pocket. "Hello! Here is something interesting!"

The object which had caught his eye was a small dog lash hung on one corner of the bed. The lash, however, was curled upon itself and tied so as to make a loop of whipcord.

"What do you make of that, Watson?"

"It's a common enough lash. But I don't know why it should be tied."

"That is not quite so common, is it? Ah, me! it's a wicked world, and when a clever man turns his brains to crime it is the worst of all. I think that I have seen enough now, Miss Stoner, and with your permission we shall walk out upon the lawn."

I had never seen my friend's face so grim or his brow so dark as it was when we turned from the scene of this investigation. We had walked several times up and down the lawn, neither Miss Stoner nor myself liking to break in upon his thoughts before he roused himself from his reverie.

"It is very essential, Miss Stoner," said he, "that you should absolutely follow my advice in every respect."

"I shall most certainly do so."

"The matter is too serious for any hesitation. Your life may depend upon your compliance."

"I assure you that I am in your hands."

"In the first place, both my friend and I must spend the night in your room."

Both Miss Stoner and I gazed at him in astonishment.

"Yes, it must be so. Let me explain. I believe that that is the village inn over there?"

"Yes, that is the Crown."

"Very good. Your windows would be visible from there?"

"Certainly."

"You must confine yourself to your room, on pretence of a headache, when your stepfather comes back. Then when you hear him retire for the night, you must open the shutters of your window, undo the hasp, put your lamp there as a signal to us, and then withdraw quietly with everything which you are likely to want into the room which you used to occupy. I have no doubt that, in spite of the repairs, you could manage there for one night."

"Oh, yes, easily."

"The rest you will leave in our hands."

"But what will you do?"

"We shall spend the night in your room, and we shall investigate the cause of this noise which has disturbed you."

"I believe, Mr. Holmes, that you have already made up your mind," said Miss Stoner, laying her hand upon

my companion's sleeve.

"Perhaps I have."

"Then, for pity's sake, tell me what was the cause of my sister's death."

"I should prefer to have clearer proofs before I speak."

"You can at least tell me whether my own thought is correct, and if she died from some sudden fright."

"No, I do not think so. I think that there was probably some more tangible cause. And now, Miss Stoner, we must leave you, for it Dr. Roylott returned and saw us our journey would be in vain. Good-bye, and be brave, for it you will do what I have told you you may rest assured that we shall soon drive away the dangers that threaten you."

Sherlock Holmes and I had no difficulty in engaging a bedroom and sitting-room at the Crown Inn. They were on the upper floor, and from our window we could command a view of the avenue gate, and of the inhabited wing of Stoke Moran Manor House. At dusk we saw Dr. Grimesby Roylott drive past, his huge form looming up beside the little figure of the lad who drove him. The boy had some looming up beside the little figure of the lad who drove him. The boy had some slight difficulty in undoing the heavy iron gates, and we heard the hoarse roar of the doctor's voice and saw the fury with which he shook his clinched fists at him. The trap drove on, and a few minutes later we saw a sudden light spring up among the trees as the lamp was lit in one of the sitting-rooms.

"Do you know, Watson," said Holmes as we sat together in the gathering darkness, "I have really some scruples as to taking you to-night. There is a distinct element of danger."

"Can I be of assistance?"

"Your presence might be invaluable."

"Then I shall certainly come."

"It is very kind of you."

"You speak of danger. You have evidently seen more in these rooms than was visible to me."

"No, but I fancy that I may have deduced a little more. I imagine that you saw all that I did."

"I saw nothing remarkable save the bell-rope, and what purpose that could answer I confess is more than I can imagine."

"You saw the ventilator, too?"

"Yes, but I do not think that it is such a very unusual thing to have a small opening between two rooms. It was so small that a rat could hardly pass through."

"I knew that we should find a ventilator before ever we came to Stoke Moran."

"My dear Holmes!"

"Oh, yes, I did. You remember in her statement she said that her sister could smell Dr. Roylott's cigar. Now, of course that suggested at once that there must be a communication between the two rooms. It could only be a small one, or it would have been remarked upon at the coroner's inquiry. I deduced a ventilator."

"But what harm can there be in that?"

"Well, there is at least a curious coincidence of dates. A ventilator is made, a cord is hung, and a lady who sleeps in the bed dies. Does not that strike you?"

"I cannot as yet see any connection."

"Did you observe anything very peculiar about that bed?"

"No."

"It was clamped to the floor. Did you ever see a bed fastened like that before?"

"I cannot say that I have."

"The lady could not move her bed. It must always be in the same relative position to the ventilator and to the rope—or so we may call it, since it was clearly never meant for a bell-pull."

"Holmes," I cried, "I seem to see dimly what you are hinting at. We are only just in time to prevent some subtle and horrible crime."

"Subtle enough and horrible enough. When a doctor does go wrong he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge. Palmer and Pritchard were among the heads of their profession. This man strikes even deeper, but I think Watson, that we shall be able to strike deeper still. But we shall have horrors enough before the night is over; for goodness' sake let us have a quiet pipe and turn our minds for a few hours to something more cheerful."

About nine o'clock the light among the trees was extinguished, and all was dark in the direction of the Manor House. Two hours passed slowly away, and then, suddenly, just at the stroke of eleven, a single bright light shone out right in front of us.

"That is our signal," said Holmes, springing to his feet; "it comes from the middle window."

As we passed out he exchanged a few words with the landlord, explaining that we were going on a late visit to an acquaintance, and that it was possible that we might spend the night there. A moment later we were out on the dark road, a chill wind blowing in our faces, and one yellow light twinkling in front of us through the gloom to guide us on our sombre errand.

There was little difficulty in entering the grounds, for unrepaired breaches gaped in the old park wall. Making our way among the trees, we reached the lawn, crossed it, and were about to enter through the window when out from a clump of laurel bushes there darted what seemed to be a hideous and distorted child, who threw itself upon the grass with writhing limbs and then ran swiftly across the lawn into the darkness.

"My God!" I whispered; "did you see it?"

Holmes was for the moment as startled as I. His hand closed like a vise upon my wrist in his agitation. Then he broke into a low laugh and put his lips to my ear.

"It is a nice household," he murmured. "That is the baboon."

I had forgotten the strange pets which the doctor affected. There was a cheetah, too; perhaps we might find it upon our shoulders at any moment. I confess that I felt easier in my mind when, after following Holmes' example and slipping off my shoes, I found myself inside the bedroom. My companion noiselessly closed the shutters, moved the lamp onto the table, and cast his eyes round the room. All was as we had seen it in the daytime. Then creeping up to me and making a trumpet of his hand, he whispered into my ear again so gently that it was all that I could do to distinguish the words:

"The least sound would be fatal to our plans."

I nodded to show that I had heard.

"We must sit without light. He would see it through the ventilator."

I nodded again.

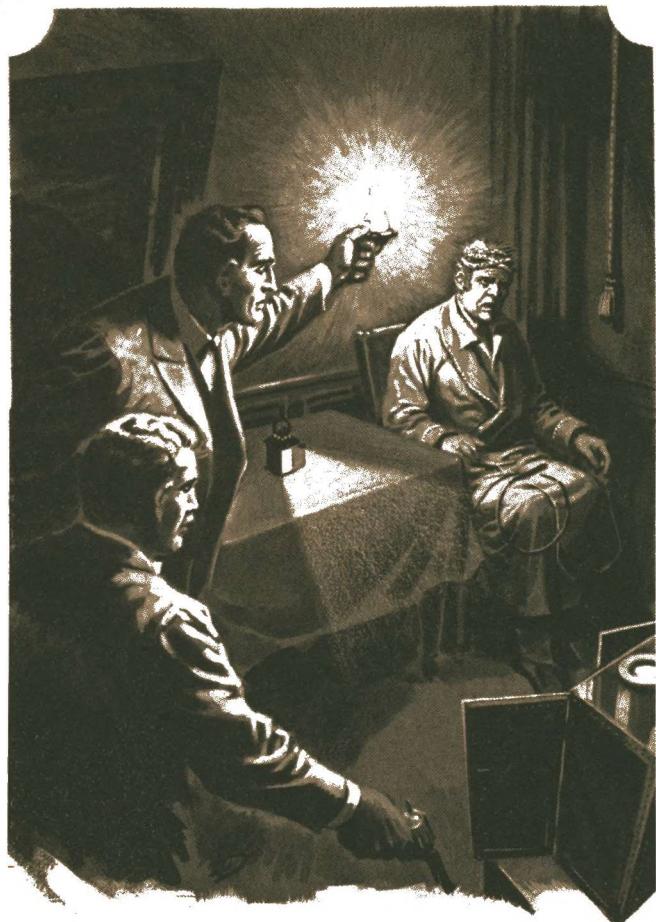
"Do not go asleep; your very life may depend upon it. Have your pistol ready in case we should need it. I will sit on the side of the bed, and you in that chair."

I took out my revolver and laid it on the corner of the table.

Holmes had brought up a long thin cane, and this he

placed upon the bed beside him. By it he laid the box of matches and the stump of a candle. Then he turned down the lamp, and we were left in darkness.

How shall I ever forget that dreadful vigil? I could not hear a sound, not even the drawing of a breath, and yet I knew that my companion sat open-eyed, within a few feet of me, in the same state of nervous tension in which I was myself. The shutters cut off the least ray of light, and we waited in absolute darkness. From outside came the occasional cry of a night-bird, and once at our very window a long drawn catlike whine, which told us that



*"He made neither sound nor motion."*



the cheetah was indeed at liberty. Far away we could hear the deep tones of the parish clock, which boomed out every quarter of an hour. How long they seemed, those quarters! Twelve struck, and one and two and three, and still we sat waiting silently for whatever might befall.

Suddenly there was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the ventilator, which vanished immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Someone in the next room had lit a dark-lantern. I heard a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more, though the smell grew stronger. For half an hour I sat with straining ears. Then suddenly another sound became audible—a very gentle, soothing sound, like that of a

small jet of steam escaping continually from a kettle. The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously with his cane at the bell-pull.

"You see it, Watson?" he yelled. "You see it?"

But I saw nothing. At the moment when Holmes struck the light I heard a low, clear whistle, but the sudden glare flashing into my weary eyes made it impossible for me to tell what it was at which my friend lashed so savagely. I could, however, see that his face was deadly pale and filled with honor and loathing.

He had ceased to strike and was gazing up at the ventilator when suddenly there broke from the silence of the night the most horrible cry to which I have ever listened. It swelled up louder and louder, a hoarse yell of pain and fear and anger all mingled in the one dreadful shriek. They say that away down in the village, and even in the distant parsonage, that cry raised the sleepers from their beds. It struck cold to our hearts, and I stood gazing at Holmes, and he at me, until the last echoes of it had died away into the silence from which it rose.

"What can it mean?" I gasped.

"It means that it is all over," Holmes answered. "And perhaps, after all, it is for the best. Take your pistol, and we will enter Dr. Roylott's room."

With a grave face he lit the lamp and led the way down the corridor. Twice he struck at the chamber door without any reply from within. Then he turnd the handle and entered, I at his heels, with the cocked pistol in my hand.

It was a singular sight which met our eyes. On the table stood a dark-lantern with the shutter half open, throwing a brilliant beam of light upon the iron safe, the door of which was ajar. Beside this table, on the wooden chair, sat Dr. Grimesby Roylott, clad in a long gray dressing-gown, his bare ankles protruding beneath, and his feet thrust into red heelless Turkish slippers. Across his lap lay the short stock with the long lash which we had noticed during the day. His chin was cocked upward and his eyes were fixed in a dreadful, rigid stare at the corner of the ceiling. Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tightly round his head. As we entered he made neither sound nor motion.

"The band! The speckled band!" whispered Holmes.

I took a step forward. In an instant his strange headgear began to move, and there reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed neck of a loathsome serpent.

"It is a swamp adder!" cried Holmes; "the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten. Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another. Let us thrust this creature back into its den, and we can then remove Miss Stoner to some place of shelter and let the county police know what has happened."

As he spoke he drew the dog-whip swiftly from the dead man's lap, and throwing the noose round the reptile's neck he drew it from its horrid perch and, carrying it at arm's length, threw it into the iron safe, which he closed upon it.

Such are the true facts of the death of Dr. Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran. It is not necessary that I should prolong a narrative which has already run to too great a length by telling how we broke the sad news to the terrified girl, how we conveyed her by the morning

train to the care of her good aunt at Harrow, of how the slow process of official inquiry came to the conclusion that the doctor met his fate while indiscreetly playing with a dangerous pet. The little which I had yet to learn of the case was told me by Sherlock Holmes as we travelled back next day.

"I had," said he, "come to an entirely erroneous conclusion which shows, my dear Watson, how dangerous it always is to reason from insufficient data. The presence of the gypsies, and the use of the word 'band,' which was used by the poor girl, no doubt to explain the appearance which she had caught a hurried glimpse of by the light of her match, were sufficient to put me upon an entirely wrong scent. I can only claim the merit that I instantly reconsidered my position when, however, it became clear to me that whatever danger threatened an occupant of the room could not come either from the window or the door. My attention was speedily drawn, as I have already remarked to you, to this ventilator, and to the bell-rope which hung down to the bed. The discovery that this was a dummy, and that the bed was clamped to the floor, instantly gave rise to the suspicion that the rope was there as a bridge for something passing through the hole and coming to the bed. The idea of a snake instantly occurred to me, and when I coupled it with my knowledge that the doctor was furnished with a supply of creatures from India, I felt that I was probably on the right track. The idea of using a form of poison which could not possibly be discovered by any chemical test was just such a one as would occur to a clever and ruthless man who had had an Eastern training. The rapidity with which such a poison would take effect would also, from his point of view, be an advantage. It would be a sharp-eyed coroner, indeed, who could distinguish the two little dark punctures which would show where the poison fangs had done their work. Then I thought of the whistle. Of course he must recall the snake before the morning light revealed it to the victim. He had trained it, probably by the use of the milk which we saw, to return to him when summoned. He would put it through this ventilator at the hour that he thought best, with the certainty that it would crawl down the rope and land on the bed. It might or might not bite the occupant, perhaps she might escape every night for a week, but sooner or later she must fall a victim."

"I had come to these conclusions before ever I had entered his room. An inspection of his chair showed me that he had been in the habit of standing on it, which of course would be necessary in order that he should reach the ventilator. The sight of the safe, the saucer of milk, and the loop of whipcord were enough to finally dispel any doubts which may have remained. The metallic clang heard by Miss Stoner was obviously caused by her stepfather hastily closing the door of his safe upon its terrible occupant. Having once made up my mind, you know the steps which I took in order to put the matter to the proof. I heard the creature hiss as I have no doubt that you did also, and I instantly lit the light and attacked it."

"With the result of driving it through the ventilator."

"And also with the result of causing it to turn upon its master at the other side. Some of the blows of my cane came home and roused its snakish temper, so that it flew upon the first person it saw. 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 very heavily upon my conscience."



# THE TRADITIONAL QUIZ



■ One thing that's common to nearly all of the Scion Societies of the Baker Street Irregulars is that every meeting features a quiz on one of the Sherlock Holmes stories published under the name of Arthur Conan Doyle. The quiz is prepared by a member of the group and must be confined to material which is there on the printed page of the story for anyone to see. (In some instances questions based on logical deductions from the facts given in the story are permitted.) The number of questions in a quiz varies with the customs of the particular club, but they generally range between 20 and 50. One or more prizes may be awarded the winner or winners in the event of ties; these will be some sort of Sherlockian souvenir donated by a member or members.

"You see," Sherlock Holmes said to Watson, "but you do not observe." How observant are you when you read a story? You can test yourself by reading "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" before looking at the questions below. Of course, no true Sherlockian will refer to the story during the test! On the other hand, we expect you to check the answers if you have any doubts.

Here, then, are 50 questions relating to events in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." *Warning:* One of these 50 questions is a trick.

1. What was the first unusual event in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band?" What was the reason for it?
2. Why was Helen Stoner shivering?
3. What two things did Holmes deduce after looking at Miss Stoner carefully? What did he notice that led to the deductions?
4. How does Watson describe Helen Stoner? (Give three particulars.)
5. Where did Miss Stoner live and with whom?
6. Where did Dr. Grimesby Roylott go to practice medicine when he obtained his degree?
7. What trait seemed to run in Dr. Roylott's family?
8. Why did Dr. Roylott leave India?
9. Did he leave India alone? If not, who came back to England with him?

10. How did Dr. Roylott get along with his neighbors?
11. What was Dr. Roylott's passion? How did he express it?
12. Did anyone except Dr. Roylott and Miss Stoner live on the Roylott estate or stay there frequently?
13. What financial arrangements did Helen's mother have with Dr. Roylott?
14. Under what circumstances did Helen's mother die?
15. Did Dr. Roylott object to Julia's marriage?
16. When did Dr. Roylott show Helen the wedding present he had bought for Julia and what was it?
17. When did Julia die?
18. Why did Julia come to Helen's room on the fatal night?
19. What did Julia ask Helen?
20. What sound awakened Helen later that night, and what two other things did she hear right afterward?
21. What were Julia's last words?
22. Did the medical examination show the cause of Julia's death?
23. What happened to Helen a month before her coming to see Sherlock Holmes?
24. Why had Helen been required to sleep in Julia's room?
25. What made her decide to come to London and consult Sherlock Holmes?
26. Why did Holmes say to Helen Stoner, "But have you told me all?" and reply, "You have not," when she claimed she had?
27. Who came to see Sherlock Holmes shortly after Helen Stoner left and what did that person want with Holmes?
28. What did Holmes learn about the state of Dr. Roylott's finances?
29. Was Dr. Roylott at home when Holmes and Watson went out to see Helen Stoner?
30. Could anyone have gotten in through the window in Julia's bedroom?
31. What was unusual about the bell rope in the bedroom? (Give three particulars.)
32. What was unusual about Julia's bed?
33. What was unusual about the safe in Dr.

Roylott's bedroom.

34. What was unusual about the dog whip hanging on one corner of Dr. Roylott's bed?
35. What was Holmes' first instruction to Helen Stoner after telling her that her life depended upon her following all his instructions?
36. What special advantage did an Inn in the village hold for Holmes' plans? What was the name of the Inn?
37. What was Miss Stoner to do at first when Dr. Roylott returned?
38. What was she to do when she heard Dr. Roylott retire for the night? (Give three particulars.)
39. Why was Holmes reluctant to take Watson back to the house that night?
40. What did Holmes and Watson encounter outside Dr. Roylott's house when they returned after dark?
41. What were Holmes' whispered instructions to Watson once they were inside Julia Stoner's bedroom? (Give three particulars.)
42. Where did Holmes and Watson position themselves?
43. What did they see after the clock struck three?
44. What did they hear about half an hour later?
45. What did Holmes do when they heard the sound referred to above? (Give three particulars.)
46. What was the next thing they heard?
47. What was Dr. Roylott doing when Holmes and Watson burst into his bedroom?
48. What did he appear to be wearing on his head?
49. What was the speckled band?
50. Why did the snake bite Roylott?

Score yourself two points each for single questions; one point for each part of double questions, and one point if you get two out of three where three particulars are asked for—two points if you get all three.

ANSWERS: (These are taken from the facsimile edition of the "Complete Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes." However, the variations in other editions are not great enough to make any substantial difference in the answers.)

1. Holmes woke Watson up at seven o'clock in the morning. Usually, Holmes slept late, and Watson was the first up. The reason for this event is that Mrs. Hudson awoke Holmes to tell him he had a visitor.

2. It was not the chill of the early April morning; it was fear.
3. She had come to London by train and before taking the train she had ridden some distance in a dog-cart. Holmes observed a return ticket in the palm of her glove and noticed splashes of mud on the left arm of her jacket. "There is no vehicle save a dog-cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the left hand seat of the driver."
4. Her face and figure were those of a woman of 30; her hair was shot with premature gray; her expression was weary and haggard.
5. At Stokes Moran, Surrey, with her step-father, Dr. Grimesby Roylott.
6. Calcutta, India.
7. A violent temper.
8. He beat his native butler to death in a fit of anger, and served a long jail sentence.
9. He married Helen Stoner's mother and brought his wife, and her twin daughters, Helen and Julia, with him.
10. He shut himself up in the house and quarreled with everyone who crossed his path.
11. He had a passion for Indian animals and kept a cheetah and a baboon on the premises, allowing both to run loose.
12. Dr. Roylott welcomed gypsies, permitted them to camp on his estate when they wished, and spent much time with them.
13. Helen Stoner's mother was a rich widow. She bequeathed her income to Dr. Roylott, with the provision that a specific annual payment would be made to each of her daughters if they got married.
14. She was killed in a railway accident.
15. He made no objection.
16. That is the trick question. Dr. Roylott did not intend to give Julia any wedding present.
17. Julia Stoner died two years before the meeting with Holmes.
18. She was troubled by the odor of Dr. Roylott's strong cigars.
19. If Helen had heard a whistling sound during the past few nights.
20. She heard a wild scream, a low whistle, and a clanging sound.
21. "Oh, my God! Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!"
22. No signs of violence, no trace of poison were found. Death was presumed to be due to nervous shock and terror.
23. She received and accepted a proposal of marriage.

(Continued on page 74)

# DIRECTORY OF "SHERLOCK HOLMES" BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

JANUARY 6, 1977

By Ronald B. De Waal

## Bookstores

Baker Street Books  
1220 La Plaza  
Cotati, CA 94928  
(707) 795-9691

## Hotel

Sherlock Holmes Hotel  
Baker St.  
London, W1  
01-486 6161  
Operated by Adda International Ltd.  
Opened: 1971

## Motel

Sherlock Holmes Motel  
3860 Meiringen, Switzerland  
036 71 11 24  
Owner: Hans Peter Thoeni  
Opened: July 1, 1970

## Pet Detective Agency

Sherlock Bones  
"Tracer of missing pets"  
P. O. Box 23933  
Oakland, CA  
(415) 655-9666  
Owner: John Keane  
Opened: October 1976

## Pipe and Tobacco Shops

Sherlock Holmes Fine Pipes  
& Tobacco Ltd.  
3042 B Portage Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3K 0Y1  
(204) 889-9781  
Owner: Nick Anderton

Sherlock Holmes Pipe Shop, Ltd.  
12142 Brookhurst St.  
Garden Grove, CA 92640  
(714) 534-4970  
Owner: Henry O. "Hank" Garrard  
Opened: August 8, 1971

Sherlock Pipes & Tobaccos  
4062 Templeton Gap Blvd.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
(303) 598-4444  
Owner: Gerald W. Crispin

Sherlock's Home  
"Tobacco, Games, Records"  
55 Alice St.  
Jack London Village  
Oakland, CA 94607  
(415) 465-7893  
Owners: Ray and Judy Diamond

## Real Estate Companies

Sherlock Homes, Inc., Realtors  
"We take the mystery out of real estate"  
380 Maple Ave., W.  
Vienna, VA 22180  
(703) 938-3300  
President: Miles M. Hoover, Jr.  
Opened: June 25, 1971

Sherlock Homes Realty  
"Put us on your case"  
1415 N. College Ave.  
Ft. Collins, CO 80521  
(303) 221-4600  
Owner: Vic Koenig  
Opened: October 18, 1976

## Restaurants

Baker Street  
Bagerstraede 9  
1617 Copenhagen V, Denmark  
(01) 31 96 15  
Owners: Lene Falk and Bo Hyllested  
Opened: April 7, 1976

The Baker Street Pub  
365 W. Monroe St.  
Chicago, IL 60606  
(312) 236-3979  
Owner: John Rubull  
Dedicated April 28, 1969  
by Hugo's Companions

Baker Street Restaurant & Pub  
2627 11th St. Rd.  
Greeley, CO 80631  
(303) 356-4500  
Manager: Sandra Bodie  
Opened: August 9, 1976  
Dedicated September 18, 1976  
by Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients

Dr. Watson's Pub  
216 S. 11th St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 922-3427  
Owner: Barry Sandrow  
Opened: November 1, 1971

Dr. Watson's Pub (Hahman)  
1435 Vine St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 854-9962  
Owner: Sidney Ginsburg  
Opened: September 1975

Dr. Watson's Pub (University City)  
39th & Sansom Sts.  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
(215) 386-1333  
Owner: Thomas Lomax  
Opened: August 1973

The Fernwood Inn  
Reichenbach Room  
2122 SE Sparrow St.  
Milwaukie, OR 97222  
(503) 659-1735  
Room dedicated May 2, 1975, by  
The Noble and Most Singular  
Order of the Blue Carbuncle

S. Holmes, Esq.  
1177 California St., Nob Hill  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(415) 776-2100

The Sherlock Holmes  
10 Northumberland St.  
London, WC2  
01-930-2644  
Operated by Whitbread Breweries

Sherlock Holmes  
Pretoria, South Africa

Sherlock Holmes Pub  
75 Job's Lane  
Southampton, NY 11968  
(516) 283-3311  
Owner: Laszlo J. Petho  
Opened: 1969

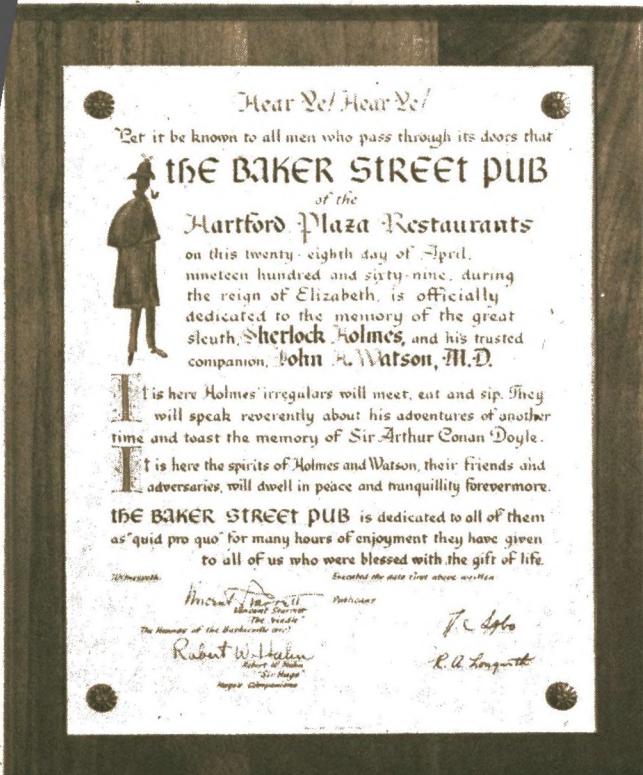
Sherlock's Home  
900 N. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60611  
(312) 787-0545  
Operated by Jacques Restaurant Group  
Opened: July 1975

Sherlock's on Sheppard  
17 Sheppard St.  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3A1  
(416) 366-8661  
Owner: Bill Karrys  
Opened: May 23, 1975



Barkeeper, *Sherlock Holmes Pub*

*Sherlock Holmes Pub*



# Conan Doyle as Sherlock

(Continued from page 13)



stage when the curtain rose. At the end of the scene, Conan Doyle stood over the performers as they were dragged off stage, tied hand and foot. One actress said, "If you are quite finished, I should like to attend to my toilette."

The play opened on June 16, 1909. The audience was very excited by the capturing of the tourists, and when the dervishes wailed an eerie song of triumph through the theater, responded with a standing ovation. Lewis Waller's spaniel-eyed, pallidly handsome hero was greeted with eight curtain calls. An extraordinary episode took place during Act III: a young captain in the Welsh Guards, seeing the ladies on stage being manhandled by the grinning dervishes, cried out, "You cads! How dare you treat our English women so!" Pulling out his gun, he ran up to the stage, tried to take a flying leap over the orchestra, and was only just restrained from firing at the astonished actors.

Conan Doyle answered calls of "Author!" and, very embarrassed but gently urged by Jean, walked onto the stage and gave an amusing speech about experiences in Egypt in 1895. Another standing ovation greeting him, punctuated with cries of "More Holmes, please!"

He did not quite understand the significance of this request at first, but the blazing summer of 1909 showed that it would take a Sherlock Holmes to get people to brave the heat of the Lyric Theatre. *The Fires of Fate* had to go on the road very quickly to save Conan Doyle from a heavy loss. By now, undaunted, he had written another play, *The House of Temperley*, and he leased the Adelphi Theatre for the presentation of this work. Subtitled "A Melodrama of the Ring," *The House of Temperley* was originally sketched out as a precursor of *Rodney Stone*. It dealt with the complicated affairs of Sir Charles Temperley, whose reckless gambling has compelled him to stake the remnants of his fortune on a boxing match. Again, Conan Doyle spent heavily to ensure that the settings—this time, of the Regency period—were authentic and resplendent. He cast Ben Webster as Sir Charles, and in a small part as a pugilist, a young actor named Edmund Gwenn appeared. With his background in boxing, Conan Doyle was determined to see that the boxing match was staged authentically: the "fancy" eagerly watching, the combatants fighting with bare fists. And, of course, Conan Doyle saw to it that they really did box each other. Their bruises had to be covered with make-up for each performance. They were supervised by Fred Binnington, boxing instructor to the London Rifle Brigade. The director, Herbert Jarman, helped Conan Doyle in the actual staging of the fight.

The first-night audience loved the play, shouting approval when the bullying boxer set up against Sir Charles Temperley's man was defeated, cheering Sir Charles when he retrieved his fortune, and greeting

Conan Doyle's curtain speech with a prolonged huzzah that lasted eight minutes.

But once again, the author's theatrical adventure proved ill-fated. No sooner had the run started than it was announced that Edward VII was ill; and his death curtailed attendance. Conan Doyle, personally distressed by the demise of his friend, attended the state funeral, and then set to work petitioning the authorities to change the wording of the Coronation Oath for his successor, George V. Although himself a lapsed Catholic he was determined to have the slighting references to Catholics in the Oath eliminated, and he succeeded in obtaining this revision.

His third play, written for the Adelphi and opening on June 6, 1910, was *The Speckled Band*, based with some modifications on the story of the same name. As always a stickler for realism, Conan Doyle engaged the admirable H. A. Saintsbury, who had toured with the Gillette play, as Holmes; Lyn Harding, a good character actor of leering villains, as Dr. Grimesby Roylott; and a real snake for the title role. This caused Christine Silver, whose jitters as the heroine were not entirely simulated, considerable alarm. Unfortunately, the snake proved to be a less than adequate performer. A rock boa, it insisted on hanging down the wall like a piece of rope instead of slithering about in the prescribed manner, and moved only when somebody in the cast or backstage surreptitiously pinched its tail. Conan Doyle was furious when a critic said that the boa was "palpably artificial," and he replaced it quickly with a clockwork creature.

The play was a success, paying off most of the debts resulting from *The House of Temperley*. Conan Doyle's thunder was stolen for once by Lyn Harding, who appeared for his curtain speech with the real snake wrapped around his neck, and giving it a vigorous pinch behind the head, forced it to take a bow.

*The Speckled Band* ran for 169 performances, transferring to the Globe on August 8. It went on a very satisfactory tour, but the New York production, clumsily produced, was not a success. Conan Doyle never felt satisfied with the play, and indeed time has proved it to be quite inferior. Holmes makes a very late appearance, at least one key element in the solution is left absurdly to Dr. Watson, and the denouement is an extravagance of melodrama.

Conan Doyle wrote a good many ghost stories in those years. His overstrained mental state, brought on by excessive hours of work, is reflected in *The Silver Mirror*, which in its diary form is reminiscent of *The Parasite*. The narrator is a hard-pressed junior partner in a law firm, who, under extraordinary pressure, has to check out a malfeasance by examining the records of accounts in a musty office:

"I get nervous and highly strung when I sit alone at my work at night. It is not a pain—only a sort of fullness of the head, with an occasional mist over the eyes."

Like his creator, the narrator is heading for a breakdown; and one night, he discovers that he is being haunted. A silver mirror irresistibly attracts his attention. At first, it seems to contain nothing more than a reflection of the room. But then "with a thrill of interest rather than fear"—a statement deeply revealing of the author—he becomes aware that two eyes, filled with anger or terror, are looking out into the room at him from the glass, and they are not his own. They are the eyes of a beautiful woman. He becomes obsessed with them; the mirror itself is "a sort of barometer which

measures my brain-pressure."

Bit by bit, details emerge in the mirror, like portions of a painting which is being cleaned. What appears to be a bunch of white ribbons turns out to be a hand, a figure like an animal clutching at the woman's skirts turns out to be a courtier in the grip of terror. One by one, the macabre details emerge, until at last the whole is clear: it is a murder scene in Scottish Stuart costume later recognized as the killing by Darnley of Rizzio, the lover of Mary, Queen of Scots. Conan Doyle's father had worked at Holyrood Palace as a member of the Office of Works; the story suggests the delirium which Charles Doyle experienced as an epileptic and alcoholic.

Another story in diary form, reflecting a mind strained close to breaking, is *The Terror of Blue John Gap*, written in 1909. The narrator is a neurasthenic bachelor, staying with two ladies at a farm in northeast Derbyshire. It is a strange, primitive region, with huge caves and beetling crags. Sheep have disappeared near a large cleft in one rock known as Blue John Gap, and have been found bloodied—a detail recalling the Edalji case. The narrator, summoning up his courage, explores the Gap, and finds huge footprints, suggestive of a gigantic bear. One night, he slithers down the stones of a mountain stream, and, his candle extinguished, hears something inhuman padding by, "an enormous weight, carried on sponge-like feet." He fires at the creature, but it vanishes; the hitherto skeptical villagers, finally convinced of its existence, use rocks to wall it up alive in its cave.

The encounter is vividly described; the beast, its eyes glaring like electric bulbs, suggests not only something monstrous from the abysmal prehistoric past, but something threatening from the scientific future. It is probable that the idea for the story stemmed in part from a contemporaneous discovery near Windlesham of the footprints of a prehistoric animal, apparently an iguanodon, of which Conan Doyle kept casts in his study.

Two Holmes stories of those years indicate Conan Doyle's assiduous reading of everything current. *The Red Circle* is a story of ritual vengeance, reminiscent of *A Study in Scarlet*, and in its opening evocation of a stranger pacing up and down a lodging-house room to the consternation of his landlady, pre-figuring *The Lodger*, by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes (1913), and echoing *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1908), by Jerome K. Jerome. The secret society which appears in the story is obviously based on the Black Hand, the precursor of the Mafia, which at the time Conan Doyle was working on the tale, had been the subject of many magazine features on both sides of the Atlantic. There had been an extraordinary trial of several members in Viterbo, and the Black Hand had recently caused the murder of the "Sherlock Holmes of America," Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, in Palermo, Sicily.

*Wisteria Lodge* had as its theme the appearance in England of a cruel Latin-American tyrant. Once again, the story was related to current news. Magazines and newspapers referred frequently to the resignation of Jose Santos Zelaya, the heartless President of Nicaragua, whose regime of terror had made him the most hated man in Central America. Zelaya's departure for New York closely paralleled the departure to Barcelona of the Tiger of San Pedro, Don Murileo, in Conan Doyle's story. There is a strong emphasis in the tale on voodoo artifacts; Haiti had just been in the news, and voodoo artifacts had been connected with a bloody insurrection

in that island.

Conan Doyle's greatest joy in the last years of the decade was that Jean became the mother of two sons, followed by a daughter. The eldest, Denis, was a handsome, athletic boy, rather like Kingsley in temperament. The second son, who was then called Malcolm but later preferred to use his first name, Adrian, was more mischievous in character, odd and unpredictable, and something of a rascal in family games. The daughter was named Jean Lena Annette, after her mother, her maternal grandmother, (Selina Leckie), and her aunt and great-aunt. She disliked "Lena" and "Annette," and Conan Doyle, who wanted his children to make up their own minds very early, allowed her to pick a name at age six. She chose "Billy," after a favorite comic-book character. Conan Doyle's book about his children, *Three of Them*, was so excessively affectionate, for all its charm, that it proved quite embarrassing to his offspring at school.

Conan Doyle continued, at just past fifty, to maintain his grueling schedule, working from 6:30 A.M. to 3 or 4 A.M. when at home. He wrote while riding on trains, while waiting for trains, and even when stopping for a traffic light in his car. His restless mind was easily stimulated by many subjects, but in 1909 and 1910, one in particular eclipsed almost all other—the Congoese question.

The matter of reform in the Congo Free State had been a political issue in England since 1903, when Roger Casement, the young and ardent British consul, reported a series of atrocities by the Grand Lacs Company and by various concerns which ran rubber plantations in the area, then under the sovereignty of King Leopold II of Belgium. Though it now seems that these reports were exaggerated, and colored by Casement's extravagant paranoid fantasies and homosexual involvements with some of his black employees, they were of the utmost importance in drawing attention to the exploitation of black labor in the Congo. In 1908, Belgium annexed this vast country, the size of Europe, and a token attempt seems to have been made to alleviate the torture and bloodshed which had shocked the world; but this was not enough for Edmund Dene Morel, a radical journalist and agitator, who whipped up a public outcry in England against Belgium.

This stimulation of public feeling proved embarrassing to moderates in the Foreign Office, since it was widely feared that criticism of Belgium would force Leopold II into a close alliance with Germany, which would affect the struggle for power in Europe. Generally, though, the Government and the Opposition joined in approving Morel's crusading campaign. As secretary of the Congo Reform Association, with Lord Beauchamp as president, Morel obtained the unqualified support of Lord Cromer, and a hundred Members of Parliament.

In his attempt to obtain help from every major public figure, Morel inevitably turned to Conan Doyle, who was greatly impressed with his sincerity and his almost naive faith in the ultimate triumph of human goodness. Conan Doyle saw that apart from giving lectures and writing letters to the *Times*, the best way for him to tackle the problem would be to exercise his talents as a pamphleteer and issue a booklet along the lines of *The War in South Africa, Its Cause and Conduct*. The difference would be that on this occasion the work would be accusatory rather than defensive.

*The Crime of the Congo*, a brief and impassioned plea for justice and decent treatment, is one of Conan

Doyle's most deeply felt works—but its timing could not have been less fortunate. It was written too late. It appeared just before the death of Leopold II, so that its violent attacks on that monarch seemed tasteless. It ignored the pioneer reforms of the Belgian Jules Renkin in the Congo basin, and it relied too heavily on Casement's hysterical reports, treating most cavalierly the subsequent, far more balanced report of the Belgian Committee set up to investigate the troubled region in 1904.

Badly timed or not, the document did have the effect of shaking Belgian complacency about what had been achieved since the annexation, and probably sharpened international pressure for further reform. In one respect it seems almost shocking today. Conan Doyle implied that war with Belgium might be necessary, suggesting most rashly that the Congo should be taken from Belgium and divided among France, Germany, and

Great Britain. He made the exaggerated statement that Belgium was guilty of "the sack of a country, the spoliation of a nation, the greatest crime in all history."

The publicity for the Congo campaign was underlined in the autumn of 1909 by a major demonstration at the Albert Hall, almost coincidental with the publication of Conan Doyle's book, and presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Conan Doyle traveled the length and breadth of Britain lecturing for the cause. The whole campaign reached its climax at a meeting in the Whitehall Rooms on May 29, 1911, presided over by Lord Cromer. Conan Doyle gave Morel a four-thousand-pound check and a bronze statue of a Congo chief by Herbert T. Ward; he presented to Mrs. Morel a portrait of her husband by William Rothenstein. By 1913, the reform of the Congo was virtually complete. Blunt though his weapons may have been, Conan Doyle had established, once and for all, his reputation as a crusader for social justice. ●

## THE TRADITIONAL QUIZ

*(Continued from page 69)*

24. Repairs were being made in the house and the wall of Helen's bedroom was pierced.
25. She heard the mysterious whistling sound again.
26. He observed the marks of four fingers and a thumb on her wrists.
27. Dr. Grimesby Roylott. He warned Holmes not to meddle in this matter.
28. Paying the annuity to both his step-daughters would have reduced him to a pitance; even paying it to one would have put him in financial straits.
29. No; he had not yet returned from London.
30. Not if the shutters were bolted.
31. It wasn't needed. It was a dummy—not attached to a bell. It was attached to the ventilator.
32. It was clamped to the floor and could not be moved.
33. There was a saucer of milk on top of it, and the Roylott's did not have a cat.
34. It was curled upon itself and tied so that it made a loop of whicord.
35. Holmes and Watson were to spend the night in her (temporary) bedroom, formerly Julia's.
36. The window of that bedroom could be seen from the Crown Inn.
37. She was to say she had a headache and retire to Julia's bedroom.
38. She was to open the shutters; put a lamp in the window, and then withdraw to her own bedroom, despite its condition.
39. He felt he would be exposing Watson to great danger.
40. The baboon.
41. They were to make no noise; they must sit in the dark, and Watson's life might depend upon his staying awake.
42. Watson sat in a chair; Holmes on the side of the bed.
43. A momentary gleam of light up in the direction of the ventilator.
44. A whistling sound, something like that of steam escaping.
45. He sprang from the bed, struck a match, and started lashing at the bell rope with his cane.
46. Watson says it was "the most horrible cry to which I have ever listened."
47. Sitting on a wooden chair, with the dog whip in his lap.
48. A "peculiar yellow band with brownish speckles."
49. A swamp adder from India.
50. Irritated by Holmes' attack with his cane, it went back up the bell rope and attacked the first person it saw—Dr. Roylott.

**NOTE:** It is not necessary to have these exact words in your own answers, except for question 21, so long as the substance of the answer is given. I changed "dog lash" to "dog whip," for example.

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**THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS**  
NEW YORK

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# DIRECTORY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETIES

JANUARY 6, 1977

by Ronald Burt De Waal



This is a revision of a directory issued in 1974 and subsequently published in *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson*. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers (when known) of the persons listed are the correspondents (presidents or secretaries) for the societies.

## Alphabetical Listing

\*Indicates a society is no longer active.

**The Abbey Grangers of Chislehurst**  
Colin Prestige  
34 Pont St.  
London, SW1, England

**The Adventureuses of Sherlock Holmes**  
Pat Moran  
12 W. 19th St.  
New York, NY 10011

**The Afghanistan Perceivers**  
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Tulsa, OK 74106  
(918) 584-0794

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Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230  
(313) 885-2300

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(304) 599-2566

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Brownsville, TN 38012

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Randallstown, MD 21133  
(301) 922-7131

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Streetsville, Ontario, Canada L5N 1G5  
(416) 826-5892

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Detroit\*

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Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 982-2947

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Cheri Hochberg  
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Los Angeles, CA 90049  
(213) 476-4211

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Middletown, KY

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New York, NY

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Toronto, Ontario

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Baltimore, MD 21218  
(301) 889-7036

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1041 Camelot Gardens Dr.  
St. Louis, MO 63125

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Vesterbro 60  
Dk-9000 Aalborg, Denmark  
(08) 12 39 13

The Confederates of Wisteria Lodge  
(Atlanta)  
Robert S. Gellerstedt, Jr.  
1035 Wedgewood Dr.  
Fayetteville, GA 30214  
(404) 461-3166

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Steven Rothman  
625 Paddock Rd.  
Havertown, PA 19083  
(215) HI6-6882

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University of Chicago\*

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338 Main St.  
Old Saybrook, CT 06475  
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Denver, CO 80210  
(303) 756-8516

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Brigham, UT 84302  
(801) 723-3142

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Newbury, OH 44065  
(216) 338-3253

The Crew of the Barque Gloria Scott  
Scott Forester  
492 Careswell St.  
Green Harbor, Marshfield, MA 02050  
(617) 837-0052

The Crew of the Barque Lone Star  
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Richardson, TX 75081  
(214) 238-9737

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Providence, RI 02906  
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Vastes gata 60  
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(212) WA3-6181

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Denver, CO 80210  
(303) 756-1097

The Elmstalker  
John L. Krumm  
1705 E. Nevada St.  
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(515) 752-4981

E.G.G.M.  
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Rt. 1, Box 22A  
Genoa City, WI 53128

The Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers  
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Menomonee Falls, WI 53051  
(414) 252-3276

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180 Mt. Lassen Dr.  
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(415) 479-6554

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P.O. Box 386  
St. Petersburg, FL 33731  
(813) 822-7622

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Springfield, IL

The Praed Street Irregulars  
Luther Norris  
3844 Watseka Ave.  
Culver City, CA 90230  
(213) 837-6628 (listed under  
Pons, Solar!)

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62-52 82nd St.  
Elmhurst, NY 11379  
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Los Angeles, CA 90046

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Washington, D.C. 20007  
(202) 338-1808

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Memphis, TN 38138  
(901) 754-7573

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South Miami, FL 33143

The Resident Patients of  
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(513) 224-5286

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(614) 457-5473

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Dr. Martin Arbagi  
Wright State University  
History Department  
Dayton, OH 45431  
(513) 873-2909

**The Sherlock Holmes Cipher Society**  
Gerald R. Clark  
103 Frederick Dr.  
Syracuse, NY 13201  
(315) 457-0588

**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**  
(The Danish Baker Street Irregulars)  
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Dk-9000 Aalborg, Denmark  
(08) 12 39 13

**Sherlock Holmes Selskabet**  
i Cobenhavn\*  
(The Sherlock Holmes Society of  
Copenhagen)

**The Sherlock Holmes Society\***  
London, England

**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**  
Capt. W.R. Michell, R.N. Ret.  
5 Manor Close  
Warlingham, Surrey CR3 9SF, England

**The Sherlock Holmes Wireless Society**  
David Galerstein  
51 Fall Ln.  
Jericho, NY 11753  
(516) WE8-5788

**Sherlock Holmes' Varied**  
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Desmond Tyler  
162 Leybridge Ct.  
Eltham Rd.  
London, SE12 8TL, England  
01-852 0919

**The Silver Blazers**  
Larry DeKay  
P.O. Box 20275  
Louisville, KY 40220

**The Sir James Saunders Society**  
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University of New Mexico  
School of Medicine  
Albuquerque, NM 87131  
(505) 277-4757

**The Six Napoleons of Baltimore**  
Philip Sherman  
1102 Blaustein Bldg.  
One North Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
(301) 727-5020

**The Society for the Prevention of**  
Cruelty to Canonical Criminals  
(address withheld)

**The Society of Solitary Cyclists**  
William F. Connelly  
6803 Vinewood Pl.  
Cincinnati, OH 45227

**The Solar Pons Society of London**  
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Bush Fair  
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**The Solitary Cyclist of**  
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**The Solitary Cyclists of South Bend**  
Prof. Michael J. Crowe  
53155 Oakmont Park West Dr.  
South Bend, IN 46637  
(219) 272-3426

**The Solitary Cyclists of Sweden**  
Ted Bergman  
Storkvagen 10  
S-181 35 Lidingo, Sweden  
08/62 33 29

**The Sons of the Copper Beeches**  
John B. Koelle  
244 Haverford Ave.  
Swarthmore, PA 19081  
(215) KI3-5190

**The Speckled Band of Boston**  
James Keddie, Jr.  
28 Laurel Ave.  
Wellesley Hills, MA 02181  
(617) 235-1038

**The Stapletons of Merripit House**  
David Galerstein, Faculty Adviser  
Hillside Junior High School  
172, Queens  
81-14 257th St.  
Floral Park, NY 11004  
(212) 343-4897

**The Stormy Petrels of Maumee Bay**  
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2134 Alvin  
Toledo, OH 43606  
(419) 536-3227

**The Students in Scarlet of**  
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Dr. Paul S. Clarkson  
3 Lowell Ave.  
Holden, MA 01520  
(617) 829-4076

**The Sub-Librarians Scion of**  
The Baker Street Irregulars in  
The American Library Association  
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Washington, D.C. 20016  
(202) 966-5773

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Metropolitan Toronto Central Library  
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Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1R3  
(416) 924-9511

**The Sussex Vampires**  
William S. Mandel  
437 Arlington Rd.  
Cedarhurst, NY 11516

**The Tankerville Club**  
Paul D. Herbert  
4565 Harrison Ave.  
Cincinnati, Oh 45236  
(513) 791-5404

**The Three Garridebs**  
Bruce Kennedy  
200 Diplomat Dr., Apt. 7 D  
Mount Kisco, NY 10549  
(914) 666-4905

**The Three Students of Camford**  
Colin Prestige  
34 Pont St.  
London, SW1, England

**The Three Students of Long Island\***

**The Three Students Plus**  
(merged with The Three Garridebs)

**The Tidewaiters of San Francisco Bay**  
William A. Berner  
4712 17th St.  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
(415) 564-6297

**The Tigers of San Pedro**  
John Farrell  
1367 W. 6th St.  
San Pedro, CA 90732  
(213) 832-4412

**The Trained Cormorants of**  
Los Angeles County\*

**The Travellers for Nevada**  
William E. Dudley  
Box 2020  
Las Vegas, NV 89101  
(702) 385-6424

The Trichinopoly Society of Long Island  
Arthur L. Levine  
463 Dunster Ct.  
West Hempstead, NY 11552  
(516) IV5-0481

The Trifling Monographs  
Lucy Chase Williams  
1466 N. Glengarry Rd.  
Birmingham, MI 48010

The Unanswered Correspondents  
Jack Tracy  
709 W 6th St.  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
(812) 332-5169

The Unanswered Correspondents (sic)  
Bruce R. Beaman  
1417 Main St.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481  
(715) 344-0765

The Unknown Worms of the  
Cumberlands\*  
Wise, VA

The "VR"  
Dr. Charles S. Petty, M.D.  
5230 Medical Center Dr.  
P.O. Box 35728  
Dallas, TX 75235  
(214) 356-6588

The Veiled Lodgers  
Diane K. Hanson  
901 11th St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

The Victorian Gentlemen  
Tom Mengert  
9102 Lake Steilacoom Point  
Tacoma, WA 98498  
(206) 584-0994

The Watsonian Society of St. Louis  
(superseded by The Noble Bachelors  
and Concubines of St. Louis)

The William Gillette  
Memorial Luncheon  
Lisa McGaw  
392 Central Park West, Apt. 4-G  
New York, NY 10025  
(212) 666-9134

The Wisteria Lodge Confederates  
of the Eastern Deep South\*  
Pinebluff, NC

The Women's Auxiliary to  
The Baker Street Irregulars  
Sue Dahlinger  
135 Orchard P1.  
Maywood, NJ 07607

## Geographical Listing

### AUSTRALIA

The Friends of Mary Fraser\*  
The Red-Headed League\*

### BURMA

The Goose Club of Rangoon\*

### CANADA

The Baker Street Pageboys\*  
The Baker Street Squires\*  
The Bootmakers of Toronto  
The Canadian Baskervilles\*  
The Sub-Librarians Scion of  
The Sherlock Holmes Society of London  
Within the Canadian Library  
Association

### DENMARK

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The Literary League\*  
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i Cobenhavn\*

### ENGLAND

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### HONG KONG

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The Diogenes Club of Tokyo\*

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The New Zealand Stocks

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# THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

# The Queer Side of Things

# IMPOSSIBILITY

## A Study of Reason & Science

By J. F. Sullivan

Some time ago, amid the monotonous ether of space, long before the existence of planets and all that, two spirits were strolling along in company.

In aspect the two companions differed in the most pronounced way. On the brow of the one, who might have passed for the elder, appeared the cold and passionless calculation of science; the eye was deeply reflective, but unimpassioned; the demeanour was grave and deliberate. We may as well speak of this spirit henceforth as William.

The younger, whom we will call James, was of a very different stamp, for in him the quick and well opened eye, the mobile brow and mouth, and the eager voice, denoted enthusiasm and enterprise.

As we have remarked, the scene was monotonous; it is easily described: stretching away and away for ever in every direction spread space and utter and intense darkness.

What wonder, then, that, surrounded by so dull and uninteresting a monotony, living through an indefinite period enlivened by no divisions of time, the soul of James should have cast about within itself for some recreative topic, some object on which to expend its imaginative energies. In truth James was a dreamer—a wild and fantastic dreamer, if you will. Sitting alone, perhaps, for an uninterrupted period of many cycles, he would follow with ever more hurrying mental footsteps the bewildering paths of inventive speculation. In the midst of that dull void he would conceive the existence of many things; he would fill space with entities, psychical and even material.

For many aeons the fear of ridicule had deterred him from breathing a word of all these phantasies to his more severe and calculating companion; for to William's cold and precise reason, that which existed was all that ever could exist; and stern, philosophic argument had convinced him that space and darkness were everything which could ever possibly be designed or executed.

This was no grudging conservatism, nor prejudice

against new things. No, he had worked the matter out in the light of pure reason and scientific argument, and he knew.

"William," said James, at length, impelled by an impulse which he could no longer restrain, yet with the detectable nervousness and hesitation of one who fears reproach or ridicule—"William, has it never crossed your mind that the surroundings of our existence are a little--that is, a trifle--monotonous and samey?"

He stopped suddenly, abashed, and fidgeted uncomfortably from foot to foot, as the keen eye of the other, wide with astonishment, was fixed upon him.

"I fear I do not catch your meaning, James," at length replied the wiser spirit.

James flushed uncomfortably; but he had committed himself too far for further hesitation. "Might there not exist," he went on, though still nervously, "something beyond mere space and darkness?"

"Something beyond?" repeated the sage, "certainly not: that is impossible. Space and darkness, as Science and Reason conclusively prove, are the only conditions which can ever possibly exist. What phantasy is this for which you hanker? Give details."

"Well--why could there not be worlds about?" asked James, bold in very desperation.

"Foolish boy!" replied the philosopher. "Do you think I have not often thought this thing out for myself? Were I to adduce the thousand and one scientific reasons which prove the impossibility of the existence of worlds, you could not follow me. Tell me, whence would you fetch your materials with which to manufacture these worlds?"

James was silent. "How many worlds would you like to have, in your foolishness?" asked the sage.

"Well," said James, humbly, "I was thinking of two—one of them all on fire, to give light to the other; and the other for working purposes."

"Ah, just so," said William, witheringly. "Of course, it has never occurred to you that the two would dash together by mutual attraction and become one? How about that?"



"'Ah, just so,' said William, witheringly."

"Well--I would have a whole lot of them, to keep one another in position---"

"Ah," said William, "and they would all dash together at a common centre, however many you had."

"Hum--that is a bother," said James, disappointedly; "because I was going to put all manner of things on my worlds."

"As what?" asked the philosopher, with a crushing grin.

"Well, I thought of human beings among other things--when I say human beings I mean something alive and able to move about when supported on anything solid, such as a world; and endowed with a certain amount of reason, and able to express his thoughts, and subject to emotions and proclivities--mostly evil, of course, and--"

"Well now, look here," said William magnanimously, "let us suppose that you have got over all the insurmountable obstacles in the way of keeping your human beings alive; let us wildly take it for granted that they have not been crushed between your world, not by the attraction of their own--that they can move upon its surface (which of course any attraction sufficient to keep them from tumbling off would inevitably prevent their doing)--that they are not shrivelled up by the heat generated by the friction of your large mass of material pressing towards its centre, not frozen, nor otherwise instantly destroyed (which they assuredly would be); let us suppose this initial absurdity, and go ahead. What do you intend your human beings to do? By the way, I pass over the sublime humour of anything *having to be supported on something solid* as a necessary condition of moving about! That is a peculiar sort of motion--but let that pass. Well?"

The sage took up an easy attitude with an air of resignation, and prepared to listen.

"Before you begin," said he parenthetically, "I can tell you in a word what your beings would do first--and last. They would fight and exterminate each other, and there would be an end of them."

"No," said James, "I believe they would increase in numbers and gradually become less savage, and begin to invent things--"

"Oh, they are to invent things as well as you. And I suppose the things they invented would invent other things, and so on?"

"No, they would invent inanimate objects, such as weapons."

"Oh yes," said William hastily, "I have no doubt they would invent weapons; that would help them to exterminate each other."

"Yes, of course they would invent weapons first; but, as they grew less savage--"

"Hum--inventing weapons is a peculiar mode of making oneself less savage!"

"Why, the weapons, as they became more deadly and efficient, would get so capable of exterminating them that they would prove the actual means of civilising and rendering them more humane--"

"What does 'humane' mean?"

"It is the same as human, that is, kind, sympathising, benevolent, mild, compassionate, tender, merciful."

"Oh, indeed!" said William; "pray go on."

"By degrees their relations one with another would become more polished and pleasant; a stranger would not necessarily be a foe--"

"Hold hard a moment," said the sage; "how many of these human beings do you propose to have in your world?--some dozens?"



*"They would fight and exterminate one another."*

"Many millions."

"Millions!! But are they all to be precisely alike, so that one could not be distinguished from another? If that were so, everything would be utter confusion."

"Of course. That would never do. Each must necessarily have his individuality."

"That would be somewhat difficult when it came to millions," said William. "Of course, while you confined yourself to dozens, one might be spherical, another cubical, a third triangular, a fourth oval, and so forth--"

"Bless your soul!" said James. "My human beings are not to be in the form of geometrical figures! Each would have a body, two legs, two arms, a head, and so on."

"Oh! I see; and you will differentiate between them by varying the positions of these parts--now placing the head at the end of one leg, now of the other; now putting the legs and arms at the four corners, and the head in the middle--and so forth."



*"Varying the positions of the parts."*

"Not in the least. The positions of all parts would be relatively identical in all cases."

"Now, James, when you talk something distantly approaching reason, I can bear with you (by an effort); but if you are going to talk such childish nonsense as this, I must leave you. You speak of *millions* of individuals whose general conformation is practically unvaried; and yet each one is to be individually recognisable--how?"

"Why--why, by minor peculiarities, I suppose--"

"Minor peculiarities!" Then one of your beings would,

on meeting another, have to institute a thorough and minute examination of him from end to end in order to discover one of these 'minor peculiarities' by which to identify him. He would hardly be able to *remember* the minor peculiarities of all the other millions of individuals, and would therefore have to carry a document whereon each of them was set down. Very practical! Now let us work it out: This scroll of his has to contain, let us say, ten million different signs, with the name of the owner attached. Perhaps you will tell me how he is going to carry this scroll, which would certainly weigh some hundred-weights? Then, granting

he could carry it, he is to sit down and wade through ten millions of signs in order to identify his friend or enemy. This would occupy a considerable time--let us say, moderately, five years."

The younger spirit looked crest fallen.

"I must admit you rather have me therel" he said ruefully. "I see there *would* be a difficulty about recognition. Perhaps there might be lists of identifying peculiarities set up at various points of the world, so that everybody could meet there, and--"

"Pooh!" said William, "get on to some other absurdity. I can't see what, save fighting, you would give your creatures to do."

"Oh, they would have to gain their living--to provide for themselves."

"Food?"

"Yes, they could only keep alive by consuming periodically something which would nourish their frames."

"Whence would they obtain it?"

"From the material of which their world was made."

"Oh, I see--your beings would gradually increase in numbers, and at the same time eat away the world they were clinging to, until, in course of time, there would be no world left to cling to at all? But I suppose you would lengthen the thing out--they would only eat at intervals of an aeon or so?"

"No; I was thinking of several times a day."

The sage burst into a loud laugh, which rolled away for ever through space.



"He would have to carry a document."

"What? Creatures whose frames would begin to dwindle away unless they ate *every few hours*? Why, they would be able to think of nothing else! Eating would take up all their time! They would barely have leisure to kill one another between meals!"

"No, there's something in that," said poor James.

"Besides, you have invented beings possessing something like intelligence. Have you provided that intelligence simply to be used in eating?"

"Oh no; but--"

"Well, they certainly wouldn't have a chance of using it for any other purpose. Are they to live to eat?"

"Oh no--only to eat to live."

"As soon as they had used their intelligence in eating, what is the next thing they would turn it to?"

"To--er--well, I suppose to finding something for the next meal," said poor James, hopelessly.

"Precisely," said William. "You do not propose a very high standard of achievement for your beings! I presume all these inventions you talk about would have eating as their ultimate object? The best thing for them would be to invent something to render the necessity of eating less frequent; something which would do all the eating for them, and set them at liberty to attempt something else. What inventions were you thinking of?"

"Well--the electric telegraph, for instance; an apparatus to enable persons to talk to others long distances off."

"But your people wouldn't have time to talk to those at hand even--they would have to eat. By the way, what do you do with your beings when they die?"

"They become part of the world they live on."

"Oh! and the others eat them? Ah, very nice! I really begin to like your human beings. Their tastes are so pleasant! Go on."

"Well, as they progressed in civilisation they would make laws."

"What for?"

"To govern themselves by."

"Govern themselves by! But they could govern themselves without laws. What would they want laws for?"

"To prevent their doing wrong," said James.

"But if they were inclined to do right they would not need laws to keep them from doing wrong; while, if they were inclined to do wrong, they would not make such laws. Besides, the necessity of such laws seems to imply that the majority of your humans would have a leaning towards evil-doing?"

"Yes, that would be so."

"Then who would make, and enforce, those laws?"

"The better inclined minority."

"What horrid nonsense! The majority would not let them! No; obviously the majority would make the laws; and the majority being inclined towards evil, the laws would be for the propagation of evil-doing. If the majority of your humans were inclined to swindle their neighbours, the laws would be made in favour of swindlers."

Poor James hastily ran over a few of the laws he had conceived, and expressed a wish to change the conversation.

"Look here, my poor boy," said William, rising, "don't muddle your head with any more of these preposterous plans. Science and Reason utterly confute the possibility of such a world as you describe. To begin with, the world itself could not exist for five minutes; then your people couldn't live in it if it did; if they could live, they couldn't move; if they could live and move, they would not have a moment for anything but eating; they could not recognise or identify each other; and so on, and so on. The whole thing is a farrago of hopeless and impossible bosh, and couldn't hold water for a single instant. Science and Reason prove it!"

As the spirits ceased, we turned to our newspaper and read the following words--

"*The North American Review* lately described the recent successful experiments carried on in the Far West of America to produce rain by explosives. The result was complete success. . . . This article was followed by a paper by Professor Newcombe, in which he demonstrates conclusively that it is absolutely impossible to make rain in any such way."

# THE LOST LEGION

By Rudyard Kipling



*"Sometimes a Greybeard speaks of his share in the massacre."*

When the Indian Mutiny broke out, and a little time before the siege of Delhi, a regiment of Native Irregular Horse was stationed at Peshawur on the frontier of India. That regiment caught what John Lawrence called at the time "the prevalent mania" and would have thrown in its lot with the mutineers, had it been allowed to do so. The chance never came, for, as the regiment swept off down south, it was headed off by a remnant of an English corps into the hills of Afghanistan, and there the tribesmen, newly conquered by the English, turned against it as wolves turn against buck. It was hunted for the sake of its arms and accoutrements from hill to hill, from ravine to ravine, up and down the dried beds of rivers and round the shoulders of bluffs, till it disappeared as water sinks in the sand—this officerless, rebel regiment. The only trace left of its existence to-day is a nominal roll drawn up in neat roundhand and countersigned by an officer who called himself "Adjutant, late — Irregular Cavalry." The paper is yellow with years and dirt, but on the back of it you can still read a pencil note by John Lawrence, to this effect: "See that the two native officers who remained loyal are not deprived of their estates.—J.L." Of six hundred and fifty sabres only two stood the strain, and John Lawrence in

the midst of all the agony of the first months of the Mutiny found time to think about their merits.

That was more than thirty years ago, and the tribesmen across the Afghan border who helped to annihilate the regiment are now old men. Sometimes a greybeard speaks of his share in the massacre. "They came," he will say, "across the Border, very proud, calling upon us to rise and kill the English, and go down to the sack of Delhi. But we who had just been conquered by the same English knew that they were over-bold, and that the Government could account easily for those down-country dogs. This Hindustani regiment, therefore, we treated with fair words, and kept standing in one place till the redcoats came after them very hot and angry. Then this regiment ran forward a little more into our hills to avoid the wrath of the English, and we lay upon their flanks watching from the sides of the hills till we were well assured that their path was lost behind them. Then we came down, for we desired their clothes, and their bridles, and their rifles, and their boots—more especially their boots. That was a great killing—done slowly." Here the old man will rub his nose, and shake his snaky locks, and lick his bearded lips, grinning till the yellow tooth-stumps show. "Yea, we killed them because we needed their gear, and we knew that their lives had been forfeited to God on account of their sin—the sin of treachery to the salt which they had eaten. They rode up and down the valleys, stumbling and rocking in their saddles, and howling for mercy. We drove them slowly like cattle till they were all assembled in one place, the flat, wide valley of Sheor Kot. Many had died from want of water, but there still were many left, and they could not make any stand. We went among them pulling them down with our hands two at a time, and our boys killed them who were new to the sword. My share of the plunder was such and such—so many guns, and so many saddles. The guns were good in those days. Now we steal the Government rifles, and despise smooth barrels. Yes, beyond doubt we wiped that regiment from off the face of the earth, and even the memory of the deed is now dying. But men say—"

At this point the tale would stop abruptly, and it was impossible to find out what men said across the Border. The Afghans were always a secretive race, and vastly preferred doing something wicked to say anything at all. They would for months be quiet and well-behaved, till one night, without word or warning, they would rush a policepost, cut the throats of a constable or two, dash

through a village, carry away three or four women, and withdraw, in the red glare of burning thatch, driving the cattle and goats before them to their desolate hills. The Indian Government would become almost tearful on these occasions. First it would say, "Please be good, and we'll forgive you." The tribe concerned in the latest depredation would collectively put its thumb to its nose and answer rudely. Then the Government would say: "Hadn't you better pay up a little money for those few corpses you left behind you the other night?" Here the tribe would temporise, and lie and bully, and some of the younger men, merely to show contempt of authority, would raid another police-post and fire into some frontier mud fort, and, if lucky, kill a real English officer. Then the Government would say:—"Observe; if you persist in this line of conduct, you will be hurt." If the tribe knew exactly what was going on in India, it would apologise or be rude, according as it learned whether the Government was busy with other things or able to devote its full attention to their performances. Some of the tribes knew to one corpse how far to go. Others became excited, lost their heads, and told the Government to "come on." With sorrow and tears, and one eye on the British taxpayer at home, who insisted

on regarding these exercises as brutal wars of annexation, the Government would prepare an expensive little field-brigade and some guns, and send all up into the hills to chase the wicked tribe out of the valleys, where the corn grew, into the hill-tops, where there was nothing to eat. The tribe would turn out in full strength and enjoy the campaign, for they knew that their women would never be touched, that their wounded would be nursed, not mutilated, and that as soon as each man's bag of corn was spent they could surrender and palaver with the English General as though they had been a real enemy. Afterwards, years afterwards, they would pay the blood money, driblet by driblet, to the Government, and tell their children how they had slain the redcoats by thousands. The only drawback to this kind of picnic-war was the weakness of the redcoats for solemnly blowing up with powder the Afghan fortified towers and keeps. This the tribes always considered mean.

Chief among the leaders of the smaller tribes—the mean little clans who knew to one penny the expense of moving white troops against them—was a priestly bandit-chief whom we will call the Gulla Kutta Mullah. His enthusiasm for Border murder as an art was almost dignified. He would cut down a mail-runner in pure



*"Pulling them down with our hands, two at a time."*

wantonness, or bombard a mud fort with rifle fire when he knew that our men needed sleep. In his leisure moments he would go on circuit among his neighbours, and try to incite other tribes to devilry. Also, he kept a kind of hotel for fellow-outlaws in his village, which lay in a valley called Bersund. Any respectable murderer of that section of the frontier was sure to lie up at Bersund, for it was reckoned an exceedingly safe place. The sole entry to it ran through a narrow gorge which could be converted into a death-trap in five minutes. It was surrounded by high hills, reckoned inaccessible to all save born mountaineers, and here the Gulla Kutta Mullah lived in great state, the head of a colony of mud and stone huts, and in each mud hut hung some portion of a red uniform and the plunder of dead men. The Government particularly wished for his capture, and once invited him formally to come out and be hanged on the account of seventeen murders in which he had taken a direct part. He replied:—

"I am only twenty miles, as the crow flies, from your border. Come and fetch me."

"Some day we will come," said the Government, "and hanged you will be."

The Gulla Kutta Mullah let the matter from his mind. He knew that the patience of the Government was as long as a summer day; but he did not realise that its arm was as long as a winter night.

Months afterwards, when there was peace on the Border, and all India was quiet, the Indian Government turned in its sleep and remembered the Gulla Kutta Mullah at Bersund, with his thirteen outlaws. The movement against him of one single regiment—which the

telegrams would have translated as brutal war—would have been highly impolitic. This was a time for silence and speed, and, above all, absence of bloodshed.

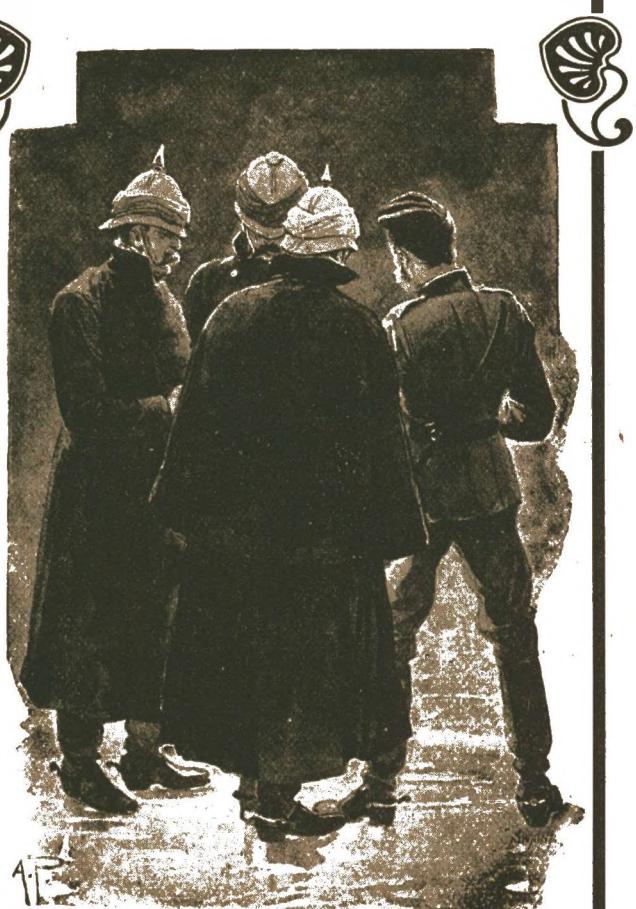
You must know that all along the northwest frontier of India is spread a force of some thirty thousand foot and horse, whose duty it is to quietly and unostentatiously shepherd the tribes in front of them. They move up and down, and down and up, from one desolate little post to another; they are ready to take the field at ten minutes' notice; they are always half in and half out of a difficulty somewhere along the monotonous line; their lives are as hard as their own muscles, and the papers never say anything about them. It was from this force that the Government picked its men.

One night at a station where the mounted night patrol fire as they challenge, and the wheat rolls in great blue-green waves under our cold northern moon, the officers were playing billiards in the mud-walled clubhouse, when orders came to them that they were to go on parade at once for a night drill. They grumbled, and went to turn out their men—a hundred English troops, let us say, two hundred Goorkhas, and about a hundred of the finest native cavalry in the world.

When they were on the parade ground, it was explained to them in whispers that they must set off at once across the hills to Bersund. The English troops were to post themselves round the hills at the side of the valley; the Goorkhas would command the gorge and the death-trap, and the cavalry would fetch a long march round and get to the back of the circle of hills, whence, if there were any difficulty, they could charge down on the Mullah's men. But the orders were very strict that there should be no fighting and no noise. They were to return in the morning with every round of ammunition intact, and the Mullah and the thirteen outlaws bound in their midst. If they were successful, no one would know or care anything about their work; but failure meant probably a small border war, in which the Gulla Kutta Mullah would be posed in the English newspapers as a popular leader against a big, bullying Power, instead of a common Border murderer.

Then there was silence, broken only by the clicking of the compass needles and snapping of watch-cases, as the heads of columns compared bearings and made appointments for the rendezvous. Five minutes later the parade-ground was empty; the green coats of the Goorkhas and the overcoats of the English troops had faded into the darkness, and the cavalry were cantering away in the face of a blinding drizzle.

What the Goorkhas and the English did will be seen later on. The heavy work lay with the horse, for it had to go far and pick its way clear of habitations. Many of the troopers were natives of that part of the world, ready and anxious to fight against their kin, and some of the officers had made private and unofficial excursions into those hills before. They crossed the Border, found a dried river-bed, cantered up that, walked through a stony gorge, risked crossing a low hill under cover of the darkness, skirted another hill, leaving their hoof-marks deep in some ploughed ground, felt their way along another watercourse, ran over the neck of a spur praying that no one would hear their horses grunting, and so worked on in the rain and the darkness, till they had left Bersund and its crater of hills a little behind them, and to the left, and it was time to swing round. The ascent commanding the back of Bersund was steep, and they



"The heads of columns compared bearings."



*"A man rolled over."*



The horses were still; but through the drive of the fine rain, men could hear the feet of many horses moving over stony ground.

"We're being stalked," said Lieutenant Halley.

"They've no horses here. Besides they'd have fired before this," said the Major. "It's—it's villagers' ponies."

"Then our horses would have neighed and spoilt the attack long ago. They must have been near us for half an hour," said the subaltern.

"Queer that we can't smell the horses," said the Major, damping his finger and rubbing it on his nose as he sniffed up-wind.

"Well, it's a bad start," said the subaltern, shaking the wet from his overcoat. "What shall we do, sir?"

"Get on," said the Major; "we shall catch it to-night."

The column moved forward very gingerly for a few paces. Then there was an oath, a shower of blue sparks as shod hoofs crashed on small stones, and a man rolled over with a jangle of accoutrements that would have waked the dead.

"Now we've gone and done it," said Lieutenant Halley. "All the hillside awake, and all the hillside to climb in the face of musketry fire. This comes of trying to do night-hawk work."

The trembling trooper picked himself up and tried to explain that his horse had fallen over one of the little cairns that are built of loose stones on the spot where a man has been murdered. There was no need to go on. The Major's big Australian charger blundered next, and the men came to a halt in what seemed to be a very graveyard of little cairns all about two feet high. The manoeuvres of the squadron are not reported. Men said that it felt like mounted quadrilles without the training and without the music; but at last the horses, breaking rank and choosing their own way, walked clear of the cairns, till every man of the squadron re-formed and drew rein a few yards up the slope of the hill. Then, according to Lieutenant Halley, there began another scene very like the one which has been described. The Major and Carter insisted that all the men had not joined ranks, and that there were more of them in the rear clicking and blundering among the dead men's cairns. Lieutenant Halley told off his own troopers for the second or third time, and resigned himself to wait. Later on he said to me:—

"I didn't much know, and I didn't much care, what was going on. The row of that trooper falling ought to have scared half the country, and I would take my oath that we were being stalked by a full regiment in the rear, and they were making row enough to rouse all Afghanistan. I sat tight, but nothing happened."

The mysterious part of the night's work was the silence on the hillside. Everybody knew that the Gulla Kutta Mullah had his outpost huts on the reverse side of the hill, and everybody expected, by the time that the Major had sworn himself into a state of quiet, that the watchmen there would open fire. When nothing occurred, they thought that the gusts of the rain had deadened the sound of the horses, and thanked Providence. At last the Major satisfied himself (a) that he had left no one behind among the cairns, and (b) that he was not being taken in rear by a large and powerful body of cavalry. The men's tempers were thoroughly spoiled, the horses were lathered and unquiet, and one and all prayed for the daylight.

They set themselves to climb up the hill, each man leading his mount carefully. Before they had covered

halted to draw breath in a broad level valley below the height. That is to say, the men reined up, but the horses, blown as they were, refused to halt. There was unchristian language, the worse for being delivered in a whisper, and you heard the saddles squeaking in the darkness as the horses plunged.

The subaltern at the rear of one troop turned in his saddle and said very softly:

"Carter, what the Blessed Heavens are you doing at the rear? Bring your men up, man."

There was no answer, till a trooper replied:

"Carter Sahib is forward—not there. There is nothing behind us."

"There is," said the subaltern. "The squadron's walking on its own tail."

Then the Major in command moved down to the rear, swearing softly and asking for the blood of Lieutenant Halley—the subaltern who had just spoken.

"Look after your rearguard," said the Major. "Some of your infernal thieves have got lost. They're at the head of the squadron, and you're a several kinds of idiot."

"Shall I tell off my men, sir?" said the subaltern sulkily, for he was feeling wet and cold.

"Tell 'em off! said the Major. "Whip 'em off, by Gad! You're squandering them all over the place. There's a troop behind you now!"

"So I was thinking," said the subaltern calmly. "I have all my men here, sir. Better speak to Carter."

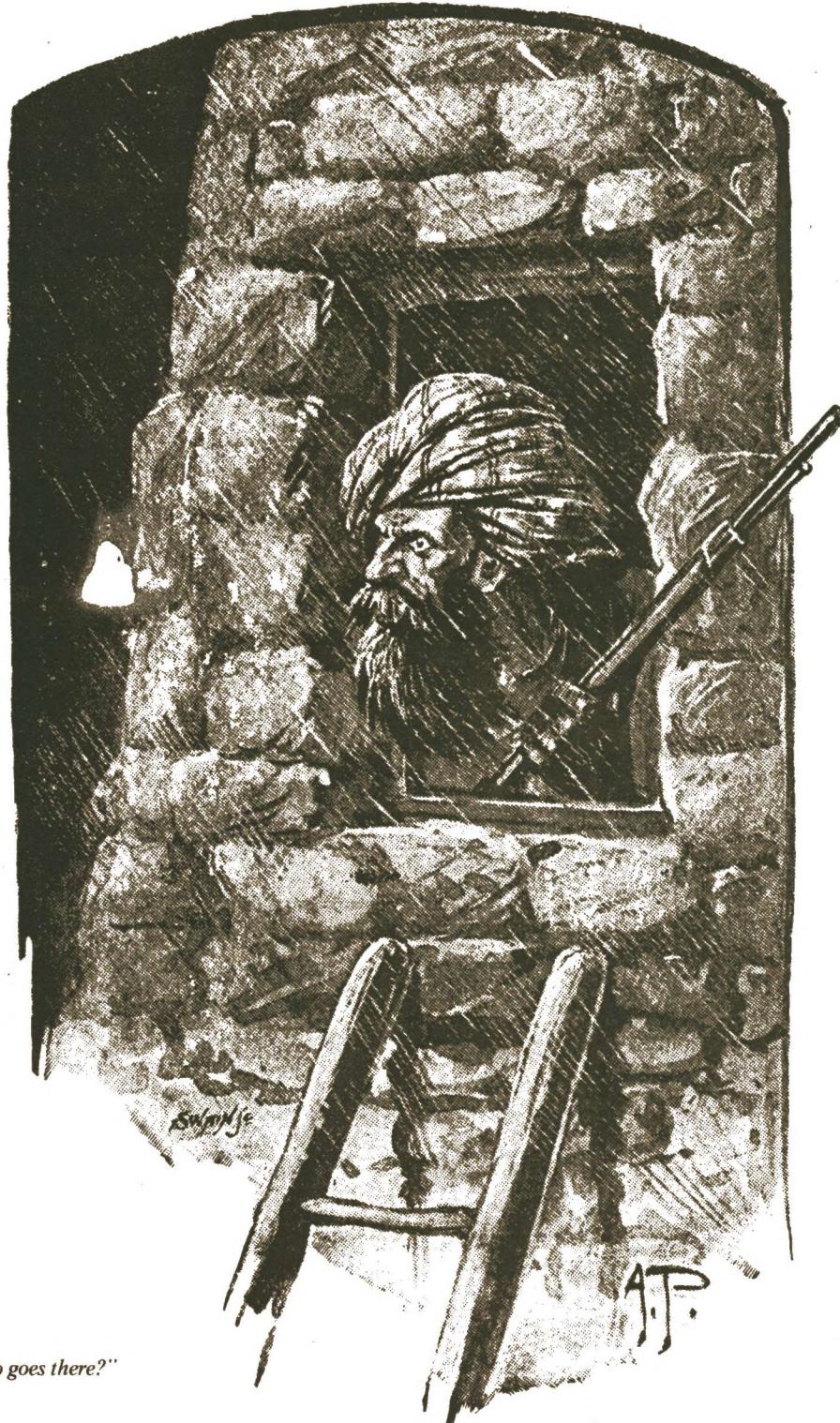
"Carter Sahib sends salaam and wants to know why the squadron is stopping," said a trooper to Lieutenant Halley.

"Where under heaven is Carter?" said the Major.

"Forward, with his troop," was the answer.

"Are we walking in a ring, then, or are we the centre of a blessed brigade?" said the Major.

By this time there was silence all along the column.



*"Who goes there?"*

the lower slopes or the breast-plates had begun to tighten a thunderstorm came up behind, rolling across the low hills and drowning any noise less than that of cannon. The first flash of the lightning showed the bare ribs of the ascent, the hill-crest standing steely blue against the black sky, the little falling lines of the rain, and, a few yards to their left flank, an Afghan watchtower, two-storied, built of stone, and entered by a ladder from the upper story. The ladder was up, and a man with a rifle was leaning from the window. The darkness and the

thunder rolled down in an instant, and, when the lull followed, a voice from the watchtower cried, "Who goes there?"

The cavalry were very quiet, but each man gripped his carbine and stood to his horse. Again the voice called, "Who goes there;" and in a louder key, "O brothers, give the alarm!" Now, every man in the cavalry would have died in his long boots sooner than have asked for quarter; but it is a fact that the answer to the second call was a long wail of "Marf karo! Marf karo!" which

means, "Have mercy! Have mercy!" It came from the climbing regiment.

The cavalry stood dumbfounded, till the big troopers had time to whisper one to another: "Mir Khan, was that thy voice? Abdullah, didst thou call?" Lieutenant Halley stood beside his charger and waited. So long as no firing was going on he was content. Another flash of lightning showed the horses with heaving flanks and nodding heads, the men, white eyeballed, glaring beside them, and the stone watchtower to the left. This time there was no head at the window, and the rude iron-clamped shutter that could turn a rifle-bullet was closed.

"Go on, men," said the Major. "Get up to the top at any rate."

The squadron toiled forward, the horses wagging their tails and the men pulling at the bridles, the stones rolling down the hillside and the sparks flying. Lieutenant Halley declares that he never heard a squadron make so much noise in his life. They scrambled up, he said, as though each horse had eight legs and a spare horse to follow him. Even then there was no sound from the watchtower, and the men stopped exhausted on the ridge that overlooked the pit of darkness in which the village of Bersund lay. Girths were loosed, curb-chains shifted, and saddles adjusted, and the men dropped down among the stones. Whatever might happen now, they held the upper ground of any attack.

The thunder ceased, and with it the rain, and the soft, thick darkness of a winter night before the dawn covered them all. Except for the sound of running water among the ravines, everything was still. They heard the shutter of the watchtower below them thrown back with a clang, and the voice of the watcher calling: "Oh, Hafiz Ullah!"

The echoes took up the call—"La-la-la!"—and an answer came from a watchtower hidden round the curve of the hill, "What is it, Shahbaz Khan?"

Shahbaz Khan replied, in the high-pitched voice of the mountaineer: "Hast thou seen?"

The answer came back: "Yes. God deliver us from all evil spirits!"

There was a pause, and then: "Hafiz Ullah, I am alone! Come to me!"

"Shahbaz Khan, I am alone also; but I dare not leave my post!"

"That is a lie; thou art afraid."

A longer pause followed, and then: "I am afraid. Be silent! They are below us still. Pray to God and sleep."

The troopers listened and wondered, for they could not understand what save earth and stone could lie below the watchtowers.

Shahbaz Khan began to call again: "They are below us. I can see them. For the pity of God come over to me, Hafiz Ullah! My father slew ten of them. Come over!"

Hafiz Ullah answered to the darkness in a very loud voice, "Mine was guiltless. Hear, ye Men of the Night, neither my father nor my blood had any part in that sin. Bear thou thine own punishment, Shahbaz Khan."

"Oh, someone ought to stop those two chaps crowing away like cocks there," said Lieutenant Halley, shivering under his rock.

He had hardly turned round to expose a new side of him to the rain before a long-locked, evil-smelling Afghan rushed up the hill, and tumbled into his arms. Halley sat upon him, and thrust as much of a sword-hilt as could

be spared down the man's gullet. "If you cry out, I'll kill you," he said, cheerfully.

The man was beyond any expression of terror: he lay and quaked, gasping. When Halley took the sword-hilt from between his teeth, he was still inarticulate, but clung to Halley's arm, feeling it from elbow to wrist.

"The Rissala! the dead Rissala!" he gulped at last. "It is down there!"

"No; the Rissala, the very much alive Rissala. It is up here," said Haley, unshipping his watering-bridle, and fastening the man's hands. "Why were you in the towers so foolish as to let us pass?"

"The valley is full of the dead," said the Afghan. "It is better to fall into the hands of the English than the hands of the dead. They march to and fro below there. I saw them in the lightning."

He recovered his composure after a little, and whispering, because Halley's pistol was at his stomach, said: "What is this? There is no war between us now, but the Mullah will kill me for not seeing you pass!"

"Rest easy," said Halley; "we are coming to kill the Mullah, if God please. His teeth have grown too long. No harm will come to thee unless the daylight shows thine as a face which is desired by the gallows for crime done. But what of the dead regiment?"

"I only kill within my own border," said the man, immensely relieved. "The Dead Regiment is below. The men must have passed through it on their journey—four hundred dead on horses, stumbling among their own graves, among the little heaps—dead men all, whom we slew."

"Whew!" said Halley. "That accounts for my cursing Carter and the Major cursing me. Four hundred sabres, eh? No wonder we thought there were a few extra men in the troop. Kurruk Shah," he whispered to a grizzled native officer that lay within a few feet of him, "hast thou heard anything of a dead Rissala in these hills?"

"Assuredly," said Kurruk Shah with a chuckle. "When I was a young man I saw the killing in the valley of Sheor-Kot there at our feet, and I know the tale that grew up therefrom. But how can the ghosts of unbelievers prevail against us who are of the Faith? Strap that dog's hands a little tighter, Sahib. An Afghan is like an eel."

"But a dead Rissala," said Halley, jerking his captive's wrist. "That is foolish talk, Kurruk Shah. The dead are dead. Hold still, sag." The Afghan wriggled.

"The dead are dead, and for that reason they walk at night. What need to talk? We be men, we have our eyes and ears. Thou canst both see and hear them, down the hillside," said Kurruk Shah.

Halley stared and listened long and intently. The valley was full of stifled noises, as every valley must be at night; but whether he saw or heard more than was natural Halley alone knows, and he does not choose to speak on the subject.

At last, and just before the dawn, a green rocket shot up from the far side of the valley of Bersund, at the head of the gorge, to show that the Goorkhas were in position. A red light from the infantry at left and right answered it, and the cavalry burnt a white flare. Afghans in winter are late sleepers, and it was not till fully day that the Gulla Kutta Mullah's men began to straggle from their huts, rubbing their eyes. They saw men in green, and red, and brown uniforms, leaning on their arms, neatly arranged all around the crater of the village of Bersund, in a cordon that not a wolf could

have broken. They rubbed their eyes the more when a pink-faced young man, who was not even in the Army, but represented the Political Department, tripped down the hillside with two orderlies, rapped at the door of the Gulla Kutta Mullah's hut, and told him quietly to step out and be tied up for safe transport. That same young man passed on through the huts, tapping here one cateran, and there another lightly with his cane; and as each was pointed out, so he was tied up, staring hopelessly at the crowned heights around where the English soldiers looked down with incurious eyes. Only the Mulla tried to carry it off by curses and high words, till a soldier who was tying his hands, said—

"None o' your lip! Why didn't you come out when you was ordered, instead o' keepin' us awake all night?"

You're no better than my own barrick-sweeper, you white-eaded old polyanthus! Kim up!"

Half an hour later the troops had gone away with the Mullah and his thirteen friends; the dazed villagers were looking ruefully at a pile of broken muskets and snapped swords, and wondering how in the world they had come so to miscalculate the forbearance of the Indian Government.

It was a very neat little affair, neatly carried out, and the men concerned were unofficially thanked for their services.

Yet it seems to me that much credit is also due to another regiment whose name did not appear in the Brigade Orders, and whose very existence is in danger of being forgotten.



"If you cry out, I kill you."



# PORTRAITS OF CELEBRITIES

Princess Victoria Of Teck.  
Age 4.



Age 8.  
From a Photo by W. & D. Downey.

Age 12.  
From a Photo by W. & D. Downey.



Age 17.  
From a Photo by W. & D. Downey.

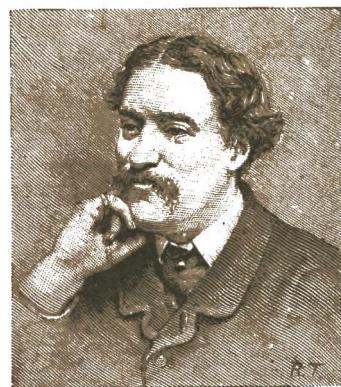


Age 24.  
From a Photo by W. & D. Downey.

The present is a particularly appropriate moment to present our readers with the portraits of the Princess Victoria of Teck at different ages, when the heartfelt sympathy of all the world has been with her in the recent sad bereavement which, on the eve of her marriage, it has been her lot to bear.

Edmund Yates.  
Born 1831.

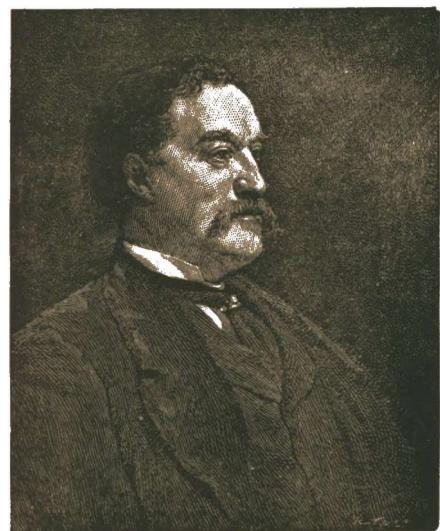
Mr. Edmund Hodgson Yates, who is the son of the well-known actor, was for many years Chief of the Missing Letter Department in the Post Office, and while in that position wrote several well-known novels, of which "Black Sheep" and "The Yellow Flag" have, perhaps, been the most popular. Mr. Yates, who had himself written successfully for the stage, was for six years the theatrical critic of *The Daily News*. He retired from the Post Office in 1872, in order to devote himself entirely to literary work, and during the same year went on a lecturing tour in the United States. Two years later he established *The World*, a paper which, at the time of its appearance, marked a new departure in journalism, and which continues successfully to hold its own against a host of younger rivals. A full account of his career appeared in 1884 in his extremely entertaining "Personal Reminiscences."



Age 30.  
From a Photo by Walkins.



Age 12.  
From a Photo by F.J. Childe.



Age 48.  
From a Photo by W.W. Ouless, R.A.



Age 60.  
From a Photo by Barraud



# THE STRAND MAGAZINE



Enterprising young Glazier distributes a few balls.



Good business!



Grandpapa: "Snow on the ground and the thermometer at 80°! Bless me! I must write to 'The Times.'"



Landlady: "It's only the winder a bit loose, sir. I'll soon fish yer things out of the snow."

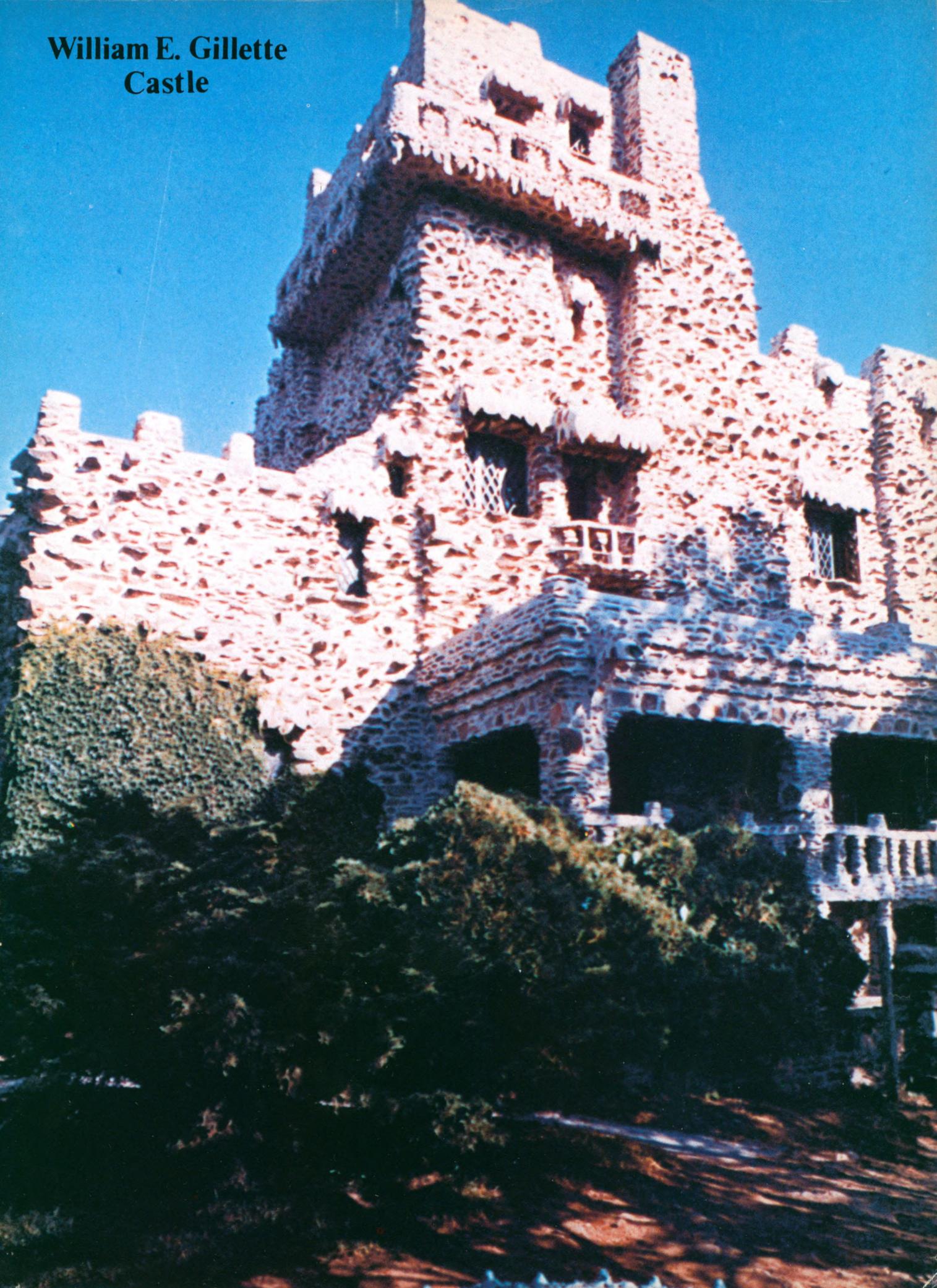


(1) Getting up an appetite.



(2) Losing a breakfast.

William E. Gillette  
Castle





Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
1859-1930

Luis  
Dominguez  
N.Y.-77