

# The Medical Bulletin

ISSUED FOR DOCTOR WATSON'S NEGLECTED PATIENTS

Volume 2, Number 4

December, 1976

## BAKER STREET IN COLORADO

by Robert Alvis

A large contingent of "Neglected Patients" found themselves in a pub in Greeley, last September 18th. The occasion was a celebration of Dr. John H. Watson's birthday and the dedication of a bit of Sherlockian real estate in Colorado. The twin occasions were a great success.

The pub is a new restaurant in Greeley called Baker Street. Decorated in Victorian style, it brings a bit of England to Colorado.

The festivities began for many of us with finding out that there are two 11ths and 28ths in Greeley. Near the intersection of the main highway from Denver and the major highway from Fort Collins is one-11th and 28th. That was not the right one. Although many of us made that mistake, it was but a temporary setback. We soon found ourselves in an English pub, with high-backed Victorian chairs, a library, and a photograph of the young Sherlock Holmes with long hair and a moustache. We were treated to a block of cheese large enough to be a cornerstone for the building and such drink delicacies as Dreamsicles, Peachy Keens, Pimm's Cup, and Baker Street Coolers.

The menu is a copy of the Greeley TIMES for December 18, 1897. It features Sherlockian quizzes, news articles such as a note that Mrs. Hudson is pressing charges against a Mr. Sherlock Holmes for "illegal possession of drugs, slovenly housekeeping, and irregular eating habits." Really, now. Opening the menu one could choose from such items as fish and chips, roast duckling, beef commissionaire, or Sherlockian shrimp. Prime rib and lobster, prime rib and Alaskan King Crab, one need not make up one's mind at this repast.

The "best of both" it is called on the menu. What an excellent name for this no choice approach.

The dining got under way and Persh Blake offered the first toast of the evening, to the good doctor whose birthday we were celebrating. Noting that we were probably lucky to be neglected patients, he quoted Holmes from The Dying Detective, "...facts are facts, Watson, and after all, you are only a general practitioner with very limited experience and mediocre qualifications..." Needless to say, the long-suffering doctor had to put up with a lot from his detective friend. The waiters then gathered to sing "Happy Birthday, dear Watson!" and were joined by the throng. An impromptu toast "to the best and wisest man I have ever known," was followed by a more formal one to the great detective by Edi King. Ron De Waal followed with a toast to the woman of the evening, Sandi Bodie, manager of Baker Street.

Then Mary Ake presented a plaque to the restaurant. Dated September 18, 1976, it reads, "Presented by Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients on the occasion of the birthday of John H. Watson, who shared rooms with the Master Detective at 221B Baker Street, London."

After a delicious dinner, we repaired to the terrace to enjoy a last cocktail, compliments of the restaurant. Photographs of the attendees were taken along with that of a painting of Clive Brook portraying Sherlock Holmes which was presented to Ron De Waal by the artist, Roy Hunt.

All in all, the evening was a great success. It was all too short. The only major disappointment was the usual one-- Sherlock Holmes could not himself be with us to celebrate the birthday of his

friend. But it is gratifying to know that here in the midst of the Great American Desert there is a place where, "A yellow fog swirls past the window-pane ...Here, though the world explode, these two survive And it is always eighteen ninety-five."

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#### FOUND--THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER

Since we reported Nancy Wynne's discovery that the manuscript of The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter was strangely missing from the Manuscript Room of the British Museum on her trip there last May, at least two Sherlockians, Mary Ake and Peter Blau, have been concerned about its disappearance. When Mary arrived in London in August, her first trip was to the Museum, resolved not to give up without finding the sacred mss. To her surprise, the Missing Three-Quarter has reappeared as mysteriously as it was absent. Mary photographed it in its glass case, and has offered to show the picture to any interested patients. Editorially, we can only conjecture that either Nancy was there on a bad day at the British Museum, or that her inquiries are responsible for the Conan Doyle manuscript's safe return.

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#### ANNUAL ELECTION

Morency R. Dame, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, reports the following slate of candidates for election to the Medical Board at the Annual Business Meeting in January.

Chief Surgeon (President): Ron De Waal  
Transcriber (Secretary):  
Wielder of the Scalpel (Treasurer):  
W. P. Blake

Intern: Robert Alvis  
Intern: William Dorn  
Intern: Gordon Milliken  
Intern: David Poole

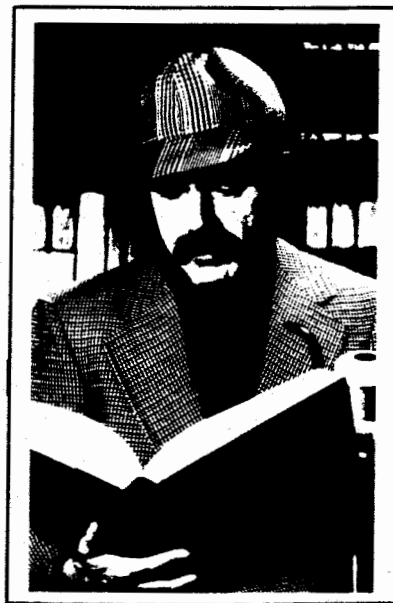
Additional nominations may be made (with the consent of the nominee) by contacting Ron Dame prior to the January meeting, and nominations from the floor will be accepted. Election will be for a one-year term, with no limitation on the number of terms any Board member may succeed himself in office.

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#### PETER BLAU AT BAKER STREET

As we go to press, an invitation from Ron De Waal to an informal dinner on November 10th at the Baker Street Restaurant and Pub in Greeley in honor of the eminent Sherlockian and collector, Peter Blau ("Black Peter," BSI) of Washington, D.C. Peter was speaker and panelist at CSU's Sherlock Holmes Symposium and also spoke at our annual dinner meeting in 1975. Ron, who signs as "Lomax, the Sub-Librarian," BSI, promises an evening of lively Sherlockian conversation

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#### DE WAAL AS HOLMES

The Special Sherlock Holmes Issue of AMERICAN BOOK COLLECTOR, Volume 26, Number 2, November-December, 1975, features Ron De Waal on twenty-eight of its fifty-two pages. There is a review of his WORLD BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DR. WATSON; an article by Ron titled THE COMIC LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, with a bibliography of his cartoon collection illustrated by more than two dozen of the cartoons; and a picture of Ron as Holmes, consulting THE WORLD BIBLIOGRAPHY. This same picture appeared in the September, 1976, issue of AMERICAN LIBRARIAN--which reminds us that in an earlier interview with the Rocky Mountain News, Ron De Waal revealed that as a boy he always thought of himself as Sherlock Holmes, and went about with fingerprint set and detective kit, looking for crimes to solve.

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## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

by Will Leonard

(The following report, from Will Leonard's column in the Chicago TRIBUNE of January 18, 1975, is again of interest as we prepare to celebrate Sherlock Holmes birthday on January 6th.)

One week ago, we challenged Sherlock Holmes fans, who celebrated the famed detective's 121st birthday last week, to prove how they knew for sure that he was born on Jan. 6, 1854. The year is easy, because Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tells us he was 60 in 1914. But the date of the year? Not elementary, my dear Watson!

The fans came up with the usual stuff about Holmes suffering a hangover on Jan. 7 in "The Valley of Fear," which they presuppose means that the day before was his birthday. They also cite the fact that Holmes twice mentions Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," which is Jan. 6. Now that's some fine, fat clue as to a man's birthday! And the late Christopher Morley once said Holmes' birthdate had been determined by astrological calculation, tho he never gave any details.

We reject all of the above. The late Vincent Starrett, our good, gray leader who started all this research when he wrote "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes," the definitive biography, in 1932, told us when we pinned him down, "I made it up."

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### NEW FACES AS OUT-PATIENTS

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## THE SOUND OF THE VASKER TRILLS: A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES CLASSIC

by Roy Schecter

(Prefatory note: The following manuscript was forwarded to us from London, England, by Dr. John Watson III, who claims to be acquainted there with a detective named Holmes. Although the events of his narrative took place early last winter, discretion prevented the Doctor from revealing the full story until now. Discretion hasn't prevented us, however, from printing it for an astounded world to read.)

It was a wild November evening, and the wind blew violently against the panes of our second-story window, as if the vengeful forces of evil were striking back at the humble Baker Street flat which had long served as the site of their undoing. As indifferent to the onslaught of the weather as he might have been before the threat of a loaded revolver, Holmes sat rigidly in his chair, staring imperturbably into the fire--lost, no doubt, in some abstraction. I sat opposite him with a yellowing text of Maynard Keynes lying open in my lap and a bowl of oxtail soup lying unfinished on the table before me, as I gazed out the window into the shroud of swirling London fog.

"I quite agree with you, Watson!" he suddenly said, breaking out of his reverie and into one of my own. "San Francisco is a singularly beautiful city."

"My dear Holmes," I gasped. "You are a magician. How can you have read my mind so perfectly?"

"How many times must I tell you, Watson," he said scornfully, "that 'magic' has no place in my work. I knew what you were thinking because I deduced it."

"Deduced it," I murmured. "But how?"

"My dear fellow, when I turned from the fire and observed you deep in thought, it was only a very minor challenge--though an amusing one--to determine the object of your contemplation. There is a charming transparency about you, Watson, that I find most convenient."

He paused here as if to secure my appreciation of the trivial nature of his accomplishment, but to me it was less than obvious.

"Monetary Reform, Watson," he continued. "The title of your book. Most suggestive, is it not?"

"It suggests very little to me," I replied. "Besides, I had just set the book down when you spoke."

"Precisely so," he snapped, as he rose to light his pipe, "and on page 154, I should think."

I stared at him unbelievably. "I am, you see," he went on, "familiar with that particular treatise and its approximate number of pages, so, noting the separation caused by your bookmarker, I was able to calculate by sight..."

"Holmes, you are a magician!" I cried, opening the book. "Though your assessment is not quite exact. I appear to have stopped reading on page 156."

A discernible frown darkened the face of the great detective. "Really?" he said, taking a measured puff on his pipe. "I should have thought 154. You must have one of those bootlegged editions with two blank sheets inserted between the title page and the preface."

I leafed back to the front of the text and found that this was so.

"Really, my good man," he said with just a trace of annoyance, "you ought to be a little more discriminating in whom you patronize. This book was obviously bought in the East End."

"Why, that's true, too," I said, "but how did you know that I was thinking of San Francisco?"

"My dear Watson," he began, "it was, if I may say so, all very elementary. I knew on approximately what page you had stopped reading and I remembered--you know how extraordinarily well trained my memory is--that you must therefore be immersed in the chapter entitled 'Recessionary Trade Spurred by Counterfeit Production.' Recognizing your rather unfortunate affinity for the sensational, I became reasonably certain that this suggestive word 'counterfeit' was the catalyst for your meditation. I had no doubt, in fact, that you were considering our success in the Templeton Affair--so named for that blackguard from America who came to London and passed out ten thousand pound notes as if they were shillings."

"But what has this to do with San Francisco?" I again asked.

"Really, Watson," Holmes impatiently puffed, "is your mind so cluttered with intellectual rubbish that you cannot recall your own thought processes? Can you not remember the evidence which convicted the criminal?"

A light suddenly broke. "Of course!" I exclaimed. "It was that record album--the one by that American singer, Tony Bennett--that we found in Templeton's flat with the serial numbers of the phony bills etched in the grooves. The evidence, I believe, proved rather conclusive."

"Rather," Holmes echoed. "And so did your glance at the headline of this morning's Times concerning an earthquake disaster in South America. But it was another earthquake of which you were reminded, Watson. Struck by the work 'counterfeit', remembering the counterfeiter, Templeton, recalling the evidence which convicted him, and, at the end of this torturous chain of association, connecting this with a city famous for a Tony Bennett song and an earthquake, you involuntarily shook your head and smiled. It was then, above the ensuing rattle, that I saw the separate threads of your thought intertwine in perfect unison. I believe that you, too, Watson, have left your heart in San Francisco."

"I went there as a boy," I confessed, still numbed by the accuracy of this deduction, "and have always hoped to return someday."

Just then the sound of a furious knocking on the front door turned our attention to that quarter.

"Who would venture out on such a night as this?" I wondered. "Why, a man would have to be desperate indeed for your services, Holmes, to risk such an outing. Perhaps it is some madman!"

"I will commend your appraisal of his sanity to the President himself," my companion said, "as soon as you have let him in."

"The President! President of what, may I ask?"

"My dear Watson," Holmes insouciantly sighed, "of the United States, naturally. What other is there?"

"But, Holmes," I protested. "How in heaven could you possibly--how, even by deduction, could you possibly...?"

"Know that it is he? Not much of a deduction here, my friend. You see, I had a telegram from him this afternoon. Now be a good fellow, won't you, and answer the door before his term expires." In a flash I bounded down the stairs and flung open the door. Out of the thick London mist, a hand reached across the threshold, bearing a card in its palm. Engraved on the card was the symbol of a bald eagle.

A few moments later, the three of us were sitting in a semicircle around the fire: Holmes, myself, and the President of the United States.

"Well, Mr. Ford," Holmes began as he ran his penetrating eyes over the great man's person, "you seem to have survived nicely the incivility of our London weather. Visitors less hardy than yourself, I fear, have stumbled through our doorway with less aplomb in milder temperatures."

Holmes relit his pipe. It was not characteristic of him to banter thus, but he was clearly giving himself time to assess his illustrious new client. "I think we may take it," he concluded, "that this is something more than a social visit?"

The President replied that it was, but as he was about to amplify on his theme, Holmes--apparently moved by a sudden burst of intuition--interrupted him.

"Preliminary explanations are quite unnecessary," he said. "It was foolish of me not to have seen it sooner. Correct me if I am wrong, sir, but I believe you are concerned about the recent attempts on your life in California and would like me to look into the matter in detail."

Mr. Ford and I stared in astonishment at this announcement. Our distinguished guest rose from his chair. "Mr. Holmes," he enunciated (though not, I fear, without a sense of having practised the line) "Your ability exceeds your reputation."

"Nonsense, sir," Holmes, to my amazement replied, "Watson deserves the credit for this deduction. My dear fellow," he said, slapping me almost affectionately on the back, "you are a genius."

The President turned dubiously in my

direction. "I confess," said I, "that I am ignorant of my own capabilities."

"Well, Mr. Watson," the President said, officially recognizing my presence (however inaccurately) for the first time. "There's no need to be so modest. But how did you get this information?"

"Come, come, Mr. President," Holmes said, ushering him back into his seat. "We professionals must have our trade secrets. I can promise you, however, that Woodward and Bernstein had nothing to do with it."

It was at this point that the great detective, perfectly at his ease even in the presence of the most powerful man in the world, encouraged Mr. Ford to explain, in a calm and logical fashion, exactly how he might be of service to him. I regret to say, however, that the narrative which ensued partook infrequently of either of these admirable qualities. Perhaps it was owing to his high and unnatural state of excitement--perhaps other causes had their sway--but suffice it to say that the President's story was so concerted an assault on the sense and syntax of the English language that, to save embarrassment on both sides of the Atlantic, I herewith submit in its place Holmes' subsequent recapitulation of those lengthy and tortured remarks.

"As I understand it, sir," he began, "you are convinced that there is a conspiracy afoot to deprive your country of your services--that, in short, someone or some group of people is trying to kill you. The attempts by Squeaky Fromme in Sacramento and Sara Moore in San Francisco (and here he shot an illuminating glance in my direction) lead you to believe that a West Coast conspiracy, initiated perhaps by the so-called Manson family but possibly organized by some larger, more dangerous group--like the conservative wing of the Republican party--may not be out of the question. Yet your secret service has been able to uncover no direct evidence to support such an hypothesis. Your hope is that where they have failed, I shall succeed."

The rain began to beat more insistently against the windows, the fire crackled and spat. Smoke from Holmes' foul-smelling tobacco filled the room as thickly as the fog outside enveloped London. In his accustomed state of rigid contemplation, he faced the window, as if searching out there for the dim shape, the gray, ghostly

visage of some faint and unexpected possibility.

"Mr. President," he finally turned and said. "I believe I will take your case."

After a sigh of relief, Mr. Ford said he was grateful for having the world's most brilliant detective on his side. He assured us our investigation need know no bounds--neither geographical nor financial--and Holmes urged him to return to Washington and leave the case in our capable hands. The President seemed anxious, however, to know when he might expect a solution; would it, he wondered, be a matter of weeks, months, or perhaps years?

"Considering the magnitude of this assignment," Holmes explained, "and the wide range of possible solutions, I should think we may not safely arrive at the truth until--the day after tomorrow. Will that be quite soon enough?"

The President stayed just long enough to emit an awestruck "Quite!" and bounded, almost in fear, I think, back down the stairs.

"His hurrying out like that is a waste of time," I observed, pointing out at the fog. "His chances of flying out of Heathrow tonight are practically nil."

"My dear Watson," Holmes said, "what an elegant deduction. You are remarkably astute this evening. It would never have occurred to me that fear of assassination was on the President's mind had you not earlier recalled the city of San Francisco, where Sara Moore allegedly made her attempt. Tomorrow morning, when the fog lifts, that is precisely where we shall go."

Just then, as we watched the window while Mr. Ford's limousine pulled away from the curb, the oxtail soup I had had trouble digesting repeated on me, and I emitted a most awkward and resounding belch.

"Pardon me, Holmes," I entreated. But his eyebrows rose at my words.

"For that Watson," he pointed out the window, "you will have to apply elsewhere."

So it was that we found ourselves, the



very next day, in front of the St. Francis Hotel on Union Square--the scene of the attempted crime.

"It's not the Savoy, Watson, but it's the logical place to start," Holmes said as we stepped into the lobby. From the piano bar emanated a melody that, in somewhat mutilated form, was strangely familiar. Holmes stopped very deliberately to listen. A shadow passed across his face. "Why, Watson," he said with a strange gravity, "what a coincidence. Someone is playing your song."

Ignoring the somber cast of Holmes' expression, I reveled in the anticipation of climbing halfway to the stars on those little cable cars. "When do we tour the city?" I asked, as we ascended in the lift. "I should very much like to see Fisherman's Wharf, Nob Hill, the Golden Gate, Alcatraz..."

"My dear fellow," Holmes interrupted. "We are looking for criminals, and that, alas, is no longer the place to find them. I'm afraid we shall be confined here for a while, Watson. An early solution to the mystery may well reside in this fine old hotel."

And so, despite my protestations, we spent the evening in our suite, with Holmes playing "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" on the violin while I sorted some magazine and newspaper clippings we had brought along that presumably related to the case. Holmes then urged me to get some sleep while he continued to ponder the matter in his usual fashion.

By which, I suppose you mean under the influence of cocaine?"

"Come, come, Watson," he said, producing from his pocket the narcotic I dreaded. "You know how it relaxes me."

"But we might be arrested."

"Considering the credentials of our client, I should judge that to be a remote possibility. Good night, Watson."

The next morning, I awoke to a lovely November day. Holmes was still on the sofa where I had left him the last evening, his eyes wide open and bloodshot. "Ugly weather, Watson," was his salutation, as the rays of sunlight streamed in through the curtains. "The true criminal is apt to merge only amid shadow and mist. And they write songs about the fog here! It is quite absurd. What at this rate, we may not get our man before sundown."

"Good heavens, man," I said. "Do you know who the culprit is?"

"Yes, Watson, I do. I made discreet inquiries last night while you were asleep--though not too discreet, mind you--and it's now only a matter of him coming to us. Did you know, by the way, that Richard Nixon used to stay at this hotel whenever he came to San Francisco?"

"Holmes! Surely..."

"And were you further aware," he went straight on without stopping, "that Ronald Reagan, the man most likely to challenge our client for the Presidential nomination next year, recently spent several nights in this very suite?"

"But, Holmes. Surely what you suggest is..."

"And can you be totally ignorant," he continued, "of the fact that this entire hotel is what the Americans might call a 'hangout' for conservative Republicans?"

"But this is incredible, Holmes! Are you actually suggesting that there is a right-wing conspiracy against the President, hatched perhaps in this very room and executed (though without success) out in front of this very building?"

Holmes smiled. "I'm suggesting nothing of the sort. As usual, Watson, you have demonstrated keen insight into the totally

irrelevant. We did not come here to speculate wildly about what conservative Republicans may or may not have done, nor to theorize recklessly about a conspiracy which obviously doesn't exist."

"Then what did we come here for?" I asked weakly.

"To arrest the piano player. And unless I miss my guess, this is he at the door now." I turned to see the man in question, who stumbled madly into the room, gripping a revolver in his hand.

"I know you're after me, Sherlock Holmes," he said, taking dead aim at us with the pistol. "And you'll never take me alive. I don't know how you found me out, but when I saw you asking questions in the lobby last night, I knew the game was up."

"For you, Jonathan Vasker, the game is up," Holmes cried, and at that moment two policemen--one of whom bore an extraordinary resemblance to Karl Malden--burst into the room, knocked our assailant over the head, and dragged him away.

"Holmes," I demanded in exasperated amazement, "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Calm down, my dear fellow," he said in his most rational tone, "and I'll explain it to you."

"The man who rather clumsily tried to threaten us just now was Jonathan Vasker; he was playing the piano at the bar when we arrived yesterday. He plays, as you may have noticed, very badly. What particularly called him to my attention was the slovenliness of his trills. I can't tolerate a bad trill, Watson. Perhaps you remember my monograph on the subject?"

I nodded.

"Well, his were very bad. In fact, his rendition of 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco' was, if I may say so, criminally inept. I therefore rang up the chief of police and requested that, for the protection of society, this man be put behind bars."

I knew full well that Holmes had made some brilliant deduction--obscure to me but perfectly obvious to him--which would connect the horrible sound of the Vasker trills to the assassination attempts on the President. But what could that connection be?

"The connection, Watson, is the First Lady. It seems that Mrs. Ford, dear cultivated lady that she is, also noticed the inadequacy of Vasker's musicianship, an especially trivial fact which was reported in that especially trivial California magazine you subscribe to.

"You mean...?"

"That's the one, Watson, and for once your taste for the sensational has come in handy. By showing that clipping around the hotel lobby last night, I was able to arouse Vasker's suspicions that I might be looking for someone with a motive to strike back at the President, even as Mrs. Ford struck out carelessly (though quite correctly) at his piano playing."

"But, Holmes, I protested, "This is absurd!"



"No, my dear Watson," he replied. "This is California."

"But even here," I persevered, "does a man attempt murder because someone insults his piano playing?"

"Possibly not," Holmes admitted. "But why fight it, Watson? We can keep Vasker in jail for twenty years on a charge of armed assault with intent to kill--and the packet of cocaine the police will find in his jacket probably won't help to shorten his sentence."

"Holmes!" I admonished him. "You didn't?"

"I most assuredly did, Watson, and think how pleased the President will be with our results. We'll have no trouble convincing him that Vasker's motive for revenge was a bona fide one. Didn't the Manson's have a piano player in the family?"

"But what if there's a real conspiracy? What if the right-wingers really are planning to do in the President?"

"Nonsense, my good man. If you understood anything about politics in this country, you'd know that the right-wingers very rarely do anything."

I contemplated this whole fantastic turn of events. "I don't know," I said, "to me this all seems highly unethical."

"And, one might say, highly American," Holmes added. "For the time and the place, we have really hit upon a perfect solution. And now, my friend, what do you say to a quick tour of the city?"

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THE SOUND OF THE VASKER TRILLS is reprinted here with permission from Stephen Silverman, Editor-in-Chief of COAST, the California monthly published in Los Angeles. Roy Schecter, Silverman says, is a free-lance writer with "the harmless delusion that he is Sherlock Holmes."

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The Medical Board assures readers of the previous issue of THE MEDICAL BULLETIN that the omission of information on Page 1 concerning date, volume, and number was designed to test the powers of (1) observation, and (2) deduction of our members. The correct deduction was, of course, Volume 2, Number 3, September, 1976

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## A SINGULAR SET OF PEOPLE

by James Edward Holroyd

Some time ago, a friend told me of an American visitor to the Sherlock Holmes Tavern, just off Trafalgar Square. Having inspected the glass cases of exhibits and the Sidney Paget drawings of the Baker Street scene in the ground-floor bar, he inquired: "Is the Shakespeare Room upstairs?"

I'm afraid my friend said that it was! Is it not significant that here was a visitor who thought it right and proper to suppose that Sherlock Holmes and Shakespeare might be found under the same roof?

G. K. Chesterton once wrote of archeologists digging down until they came to a place where a man had made a picture of a reindeer. "But," he said, "they would have had to dig much deeper before they found a place where a reindeer had drawn a picture of a man."

That, in a sense, is also my point. We have the Sherlock Holmes Tavern; the Sherlock Holmes Hotel in--but where else? --Baker Street; and a plaque in a laboratory at Barts Hospital where Holmes and Watson first met.

How much deeper shall we have to dig before we find a Hotel Wimsey, a Thorndyke Arms, a wall panel to Poirot?

The pre-eminence of Holmes in his own day is well attested. The gift of an emerald tie-pin from "a certain gracious lady" at Windsor; his services to various reigning monarchs; the occasion when Europe "was ringing with his name and his room was literally ankle-deep in congratulatory telegrams." And so on.

Today, there are upwards of eighty societies around the world devoted to the study of Baker Street. Our own Sherlock Holmes Society of London has about 500 members and is undoubtedly the largest. Many are in the United States where there has always been a flair for picturesque clubbery. After all, one might have become a Big Elk, or a Tall Cedar of Lebanon before Holmes' day. The American societies are generally named after stories or characters in the Canon. So it is possible to be--as indeed, I and some of my colleagues are--Baker Street Irregulars of New York, Sons of the Copper Beeches of Philadelphia and Amateur Mendicants of Detroit, as well as being members of the Bartitsu Chapter of Tokyo

and the Sherlock Holmes Klubben of Denmark.

Like us, these fellow Sherlockians meet to discuss unresolved problems in the saga and to produce papers or journals embodying new theories.

They demonstrate that the vision of Baker Street can be seen in the United States, in Scandinavia, or in the Far East, as clearly as in London. At this international gathering I think it is good to stress the universality of Holmes; and of course we believe that the existence of these far-flung societies is a further massive indication that his ascendancy is axiomatic.

What is the continuing fascination of the sage of Baker Street?

For the general reader--apart from the basic fact that the adventures provide a first-class read in detection--I think there are two main attractions.

(1) First, there is the obvious nostalgic appeal of a recent secure past--the somehow cosier London of gaslight, tinkling hansom-cabs, fogs; the old Queen still on the throne; scarcely a murmur of the internal combustion engine; none at all of the hydrogen bomb. Escapism, if you will.

(2) The second reaction has been admirably expressed by C. P. Snow, who recently wrote: "They are amiable archtypes of what, in different moods, most of us would like to be: as brave and solid as Watson, as clever and superlatively effective as Holmes."

What, then, of the enthusiasts who belong to the Sherlockian Societies? They naturally read--and re-read--the adventures for pleasure like anyone else. But once they are 'hooked', I believe the main attraction then lies in trying to reconcile the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions in the Canon. It is, of course, a bonus if, during this research, one is able to catch out the other fellow

A few examples of problems still not entirely resolved are:

The original of 221B Baker Street; Holmes' university; Watson's wives; the recurring discrepancies of dates--as in, say, the Red-Headed League.

The tongue-in-cheek convention is to assume that Watson wrote the stories, as most of them are narrated in first-person.

If we believe that Watson wrote the stories, the errors are due to the careless manner in which he transcribed his notes.

If, on the other hand, we accept Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as the real author--as in our heart of hearts we do--then the problems arise from the speed with which he rattled off the adventures for the old Strand Magazine.

But the important point is that, either way, there is opportunity for the enthusiast to indulge in some amateur detective work himself--or herself. That, I believe, is what it is all about. And because the Canon provides such an instant and fruitful source for such speculations, I doubt whether anything comparable is to be found in the whole field of literary detection.

Sherlockians are indefatigable in pursuit of their hobby. Three examples:

(1) Gavin Brend, one of our early members, once followed on foot the route of the goose in "The Blue Carbuncle." The journey took him into seven London boroughs and he claimed it was no doubt a world record because no one had done it before.

(2) Norman Crump, a former City Editor of The Sunday Times, made a hazardous journey along the tracks and tunnels of the Inner Circle Line to try and establish whether the train in "The Bruce-Partington Plans" was traveling clockwise or counterclockwise.

(3) Earlier this year, Ronald De Waal, of the State University of Colorado, launched a "World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes." It runs to over 6,300 entries; is published at 60 dollars; and provides signposts to most of the 64-dollar queries still being posed. Incidentally, the author is already working on a supplementary volume.

In Holmes' own words: "A singular set of people, Watson." And having so recently glimpsed the return of the Master--deer stalker, ulster and all--you may wish to complete the quotation:

A singular set of people, Watson--the man himself the most singular of them all."

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A SINGULAR SET OF PEOPLE, reprinted from The Sherlock Holmes Journal, Winter, 1975,

was the introduction to the Sherlock Holmes session of the Congress of International Crime Writers a few weeks earlier. Though we cannot believe that apocryphal story about the American, we are pleased to have James Holroyd's answer to the frequent challenge--"Why are you a Sherlockian?"

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## THE BUTTER-DISH

by Mary Holmes

It was a most pleasant surprise to find "The Butter-Dish" from the March issue of The Medical Bulletin reprinted in the latest issue of the Sherlock Holmes Journal. This was the column in which we reported James Holroyd's account of "The Case of the Baker Street Plans."

Individual Patients and our Society were mentioned seven different times in this issue of the Journal. To reach this grand total I have included 3 items from or about Harald Curjel (a member whom admittedly we share with the London Society). One of his is an illustrated article on CANONICAL LUGGAGE AND SOME RAILWAY JOURNEYS. Ronald De Waal's WORLD BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DR. WATSON is quoted in Holroyd's column "The Egg-Spoon" and there is a short article about Ron's receiving the Jenkins' Award for Bibliography. The BBC broadcast about Holmesian societies is printed in full, and in this we are listed as one of the American Scion Societies, along with 5 others--The Brothers Three of Moriarty, The Creeping Men of Cleveland, The Greek Interpreters of Michigan, The Noble Bachelors (and Concubines) of St. Louis, and The Solitary Cyclist of Washington, D.C., which appropriately can have only one member. In the WORLD BIBLIOGRAPHY, Ron De Waal calls this "the fictitious Solitary Cyclist of Washington, D.C., founded by Helene Yuhosova."

On another page of this same issue I was astonished to find an article on the British Navy, India, Canada and the bi-metallic question signed "M. Holmes"! I knew I had not written it, it turned out to be by Mycroft. He and I will certainly have to reach some accommodation about using initials or there will be problems.

I want to thank those of you who have written to tell me you like the BULLETIN. Wilbert Doran, a collector of Sherlockian newsletters, says "this is, no doubt, one of the best!" Philip Shreffler, BSI, ("Lord St. Simon" of the Noble Bachelors

of St. Louis) calls it "...beyond any doubt, among the finest of the smaller Sherlockian publications--attractive, orderly, ever interesting, an artifact that would surely please the Master himself. I have particularly enjoyed the most recent issue containing articles by Curjel and Pearson. And I must say that I commend to all Sherlockians the illustration for Curjel's article entitled 'Young Stamford looked rather strangely at me over his wine glass'--one of the most hilarious ever penned. Shades of Edward Gorey!" I find that I especially value Shreffler's compliment "orderly."

Nicholas Utechin who recently took over from James Holroyd as Joint Editor of the SHJ--"doing those things which might reasonably be expected of an editor while Philip (Dalton) does the actual production of the Journal" has asked for copies of all the earlier issues of the BULLETIN, explaining "Even though we're 3,000 miles away, we like to have an idea of what's going on in the Sherlockian New World!"

Professore Dottore Bruno Lombroso, who (if I translate his letterhead correctly) is a graduate of the University of California and Chief of the Ophthalmological Hospital in Rome, learned about Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients from Mary Ake when both of them were in London in August. Since Conan Doyle studied in Vienna to practise as an eye surgeon, it seems appropriate that an ophthalmologist be a Sherlockian. Dr. Lombroso writes, "...as I am myself a medical man I would greatly appreciate the honour of being one of your members. I do not think there are other Sherlockians in Italy and so I have never been a member of a Sherlock Holmes society even if I have been studying the Canon since I was a boy." My thought is that since the French "ombre" and Italian "umbra" are from the same Latin root, we may find "Lombroso" and "Lombroso" are variant spellings of the same family name and that our Dr. Lombroso is related to Conan Doyle's contemporary, the Dr. Lombroso whose theories of criminal anthropology are reflected in the Canon. Cesare Lombroso, physician, psychiatrist and criminologist, held that a criminal represents a distinct anthropological type with definite physical and mental stigmata. And that a criminal is the product of heredity, atavism and degeneracy. I shall hope for a monograph from Bruno Lombroso on the subject of Holmes and Lombroso.

Peter Blau, BSI ("Black Peter" of The Red Circle, Washington, D.C.) sent an announcement of the Society's September meeting--"There will be no Adventure of the Evening, but members of the Lodge might wish to attempt to identify the first person (actor or artist) to portray Sherlock Holmes with a calabash pipe." In an accompanying note Peter said, "You may or may not lose that blithely offered shilling--depending on the response to the query issued to The Red Circle in the current announcement. The problem of the calabash is most curious, especially as I am unable to locate a picture of Gillette using one. There are many pictures, including one in THE ANNOTATED SHERLOCK HOLMES, showing Gillette with a curved wooden pipe. Well, we shall see..." A postcard mailed after the meeting says, "Sorry to report that no one at The Red Circle dinner had any candidate to offer as to who first portrayed Holmes with the calabash--so the contest remains open. I believe that Julian Wolff will include a short note about the problem in the December issue of the BSJ, and perhaps I will receive some input at the annual dinner in January."

Meanwhile, W. W. Norton, Publishers, have sent an advance copy of THE ADVENTURES OF CONAN DOYLE, The Life of the Creator of Sherlock Holmes, by Charles Higham, whose father, Sir Charles Higham, was a friend of Conan Doyle's. One of the many interesting illustrations is a photograph of William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes dated 1899 (the play, you will remember, opened in New York on November 6, 1899). In this Gillette appears to be relighting a partly smoked cigar!

And may your Christmas goose bring you a great, blue gem which shines like a star!

#### DUES ARE DUE!

1977 dues are now payable and will become delinquent on December 31st. Checks in the amount of \$3, made out to Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients, should be mailed to the Treasurer: Dr. W. P. Blake, 2410 Eighth Ave., Greeley, CO 80631. Patients whose dues are unpaid when the new membership roster is made up in January will be dropped from the mailing list.

## DR. WATSON'S MAIL

Garrett Ray sent a clipping from the October 10th Rocky Mountain News about a new Scion Society, The Afghanistan Perceivers of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who take their name from A Study in Scarlet, where Holmes immediately perceives that Watson had recently returned from the war in Afghanistan. The Perceivers placed a plaque honoring Murray, the orderly who saved Watson's life, in a gas station at Watson, Oklahoma, a town they say was named for a distant relative of Dr. Watson's.

Jack Slingo calls to our attention the October-November issue of MODERN MATURITY (publication of the American Association of Retired Persons), the front cover of which is a reproduction of the dust cover of Nicholas Meyer's Seven Per Cent Solution. Feature articles are The Indestructible Sherlock Holmes by Robert Pohle, and Detective Stories We Loved by Ora Dodd, who points out that when Holmes and Watson first appeared in A Study in Scarlet few English readers were impressed. If an American publisher had not asked for more of the adventures and started the pair on their way to fame, "...they might even have vanished into limbo."

From TV GUIDE, a copy of the Oct. 16-22 issue with note, "Please bring to the attention of members in Colorado." This has an article by Otto Penzler, BSI, co-author of Encyclopedia of Crime & Detection, subtitled 'The World's Greatest Detective' as the subject of a TV-movie--and the object of a diverse and devoted group of admirers."..."As any member of The Baker Street Irregulars can tell you, Sherlock Holmes is not fictional. He is a famous real-life detective, born in Yorkshire, England, on Jan. 6, 1854...Furthermore, it is inaccurate and premature to discuss Holmes in the past tense. He still lives, the Irregulars will tell you (has anyone read his obituary?) on the Sussex Downs, quietly keeping bees. He is old now, having learned the secrets of long life from the Dalai Lama on a trip to Tibet, and he does not receive visitors or accept cases. He does, however, continue to work on a monumental book, 'The Whole Art of Detection,' which should be published in the near future."

From Celestial Arts, 231 Adrian Road, Millbrae, CA 94030, a 23x35 inch full color map of Sherlock Holmes' England, "location of his most celebrated cases

rare turn-of-the-century portrait of Holmes, decorated with portraits of the famous and infamous made available by a private collector." Retailing at \$3, the map is offered at a 50% discount to Sherlockians (publisher does not say how many copies must be ordered to obtain the discount). Beyond 221B combines "genuine geography with Watsonian pseudo-geography." It is also available at The Book House.

From--Steve Franklin, Box 717  
Buckingham, Pa. 18912

Adventures with Sherlock Holmes, a game for 2 to 4 adults. "Go with Holmes and Watson via the London Railway to the location of their greatest cases, 'The Cardboard Box,' 'The Yellow Face,' and ten others. Once there you try to deduce the picture picked out by your opponents from a set of twenty-four Page and Steele illustrations from the original Strand and Colliers magazines, mindful that the wrong answers have serious pitfalls."



Set includes 50 playing cards with silhouettes of Holmes from early book editions, 12 authentic cases, 96 different illustrations by Page and Steele in their original sizes, game playing board of

London and its environs via the Railways of the 1890s, caseboard with Steele illustrations, dice, glass markers, pencil and pad. First printing is limited to 221 numbered sets. Price \$8.95, plus \$2 shipping and handling. The Book House is ordering this.

And an invitation to spend an evening "Dining with Sherlock Holmes" at the Great Hall of the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park, New York, on November 6th. "Canonical ice carvings, food sculpture and gustatory creations offered in tribute to the Great Detective" were inspired by the forthcoming Dining with Sherlock Holmes by Rosenblatt & Sonnenschmidt, publisher Bobbs-Merril, November 1976.

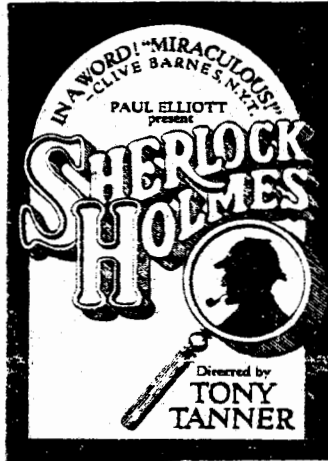
### PICTURE CREDITS

P. 2, American Librarian, September 1976  
P. 6 & P. 8, Coast, July 1976  
P. 12, Steve Franklin  
Banner, Terrance Teis

ANOTHER PRODUCTION OF WILLIAM GILLETTE'S SHERLOCK HOLMES!

FEBRUARY 22

Sherlock Holmes, produced by Paul Elliott and Bernard Jay, and starring John Michalski and Kurt Kasznar, will be performed at the Pueblo Memorial Auditorium, Union and Elizabeth Sts., on Tuesday, February 22, at 8:00 p.m. Because this will be the play's only appearance in Colorado, I urge all of you to attend this special Sherlockian event! For reservations, call Magie Divelbiss at 543-0130. Tickets also may be purchased at the door. Prices: \$4 (balcony); \$9.50-\$10.50 (orchestra).



Although under the guidance of the Royal Shakespeare Co., the play is not a watered-down version or a cardboard imitation of the Broadway show. This production was done specifically for the road. It has five elaborate sets and beautiful costumes, but ones that travel easily. And, perhaps more important, the actors have created fresh, new interpretations—ones where their own special talents are utilized to the fullest.

Reviews

Thursday's one-night stand, sponsored by MSU's Broadway Theater Series, featured a touring company of polished professional players. Director Tony Tanner's brisk production even suggests the sort of "underplaying" for which Gillette was noted during the 19th century.

John Michalski plays the super sleuth, Sherlock Holmes, in the touring edition of the play. Michalski is a young actor (in his late twenties) who performs with style and intelligence. Kurt Kasznar (of "Sound of Music" fame) is cast as the evil Professor Moriarty and his performance is not disappointing. Richard Lupino is a first-rate Dr. Watson. (Ty Ross, The State-Journal, East Lansing, Mich., January 21, 1977)

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Tony Tanner's direction is fluid and remarkably quick-paced.... And the play has been gifted with truly fine performances from a distinguished professional company, most notably John Michalski's Sherlock Holmes and Kurt Kasznar's Prof. Moriarty.

Michalski is exactly the "cool and resourceful man of action" who dominates Gillette's play. Kasznar's Moriarty is a fascinating and rich study in evil—a completely worthy antagonist to the monumental Holmes. (Peter J. Vaccaro, Michigan State News, East Lansing, January 21, 1977)

Ron De Waal  
2-10-77

