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ISSUED FOR DOCTOR WATSON'S NEGLECTED PATIENTS

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A STUDY IN SLANDER

by Nancy Wynne

A paper read at the Annual Meeting of Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients, January 21, 1977.

In December of 1975, our soon-to-be Chief Surgeon, Dr. William Dorn, offered a course in Sherlock Holmes at Denver University during the mid-term session which that school features. He and the University very kindly made this course available to the members of Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients. I took it and found it extremely enjoyable and worthwhile. Particularly, I learned much which I had not previously known about Arthur Conan Doyle...both from Bill's superb first lecture and from one of the recommended readings: John Dickson Carr's THE LIFE OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE: THE MAN WHO WAS SHERLOCK HOLMES. One of the reading assignments from the Canon itself was, of course, A STUDY IN SCARLET. Like most of us, probably, I had not re-read in a good many years that book which introduced to the world Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. I found myself fascinated on this re-reading with Part II, "The Country of the Saints"...the section which relates the motive for the crimes of Jefferson Hope.

As you will recall, the setting for this part of the story is Utah Territory in the years 1847-1860. The principal characters are John Ferrier and his adopted daughter, Lucy, two survivors from an ill-fated wagon train heading West, who were rescued by the Latter Day Saints on the last leg of their journey to their Zion, the region that was to become known as Salt Lake City and its environs. The Mormon leader, Brigham Young himself, is one of the characters. Ferrier and the little girl were rescued by the group only on the condition that he be converted to Mormonism. Of course, he agreed to these terms; continued on with them to the end of their journey, took up land, and soon prospered...as did all the company. The Mormons had been known throughout their brief history, as industrious, hard-working, thrifty, and able. It was no surprise that Deseret flourished as had their other communities.

To continue with our quick reprise of the story: Lucy grew up to be the loveliest maiden in all of Utah. One day a young silver miner named Jefferson Hope appeared on the scene. His father and John Ferrier were old friends. He and Lucy fell in love and became engaged to be married with Ferrier's blessing. Jefferson had to be away prospecting for a few months before the wedding could take place. During his absence, Brigham Young visited Ferrier to persuade him of the desirability of Lucy's marriage to either Enoch Drebber or Joseph Stangerson, sons of two of the most powerful Mormon leaders. Ferrier sent word to Jefferson Hope, urging him to get back to Utah as soon as possible. (The Mormon leaders had set a deadline by which Lucy must make up her mind to marry one of the two aforementioned men.) Hope arrived just in the nick of time: spirited Lucy and Ferrier from their home in the dark of night; and set out for Nevada, heading due East through the mountains. (Which speaks volumes for Conan Doyle's geographical knowledge or for his creative instinct!) After one day's flight, Hope

left Lucy and her father together at their campsite while he went in search of game. During his absence, the band of pursuing Mormons murdered John Ferrier and kidnapped Lucy. Jefferson Hope's revenge is, of course, the theme of the story. Or is, rather, the crime which was to serve as the foil against which the talents of Sherlock Holmes could be displayed.

We will not concern ourselves this evening with the geographical errors in A STUDY IN SCARLET. They are many and some of them "whoppers" indeed. But we will examine the rather shabby treatment of the Latter Day Saints by Sir Arthur, particularly in the light of his reputation as an avid historian and as a gentleman of great honor. I am intrigued by the apparent contrast. How could the same man be responsible for seeing justice done in the case of George Edalji, honor so loyally marriage vows to a woman he no longer loved, and yet write so glibly the slanderous things he did about the Mormon church?

(At this point, a few paragraphs from Chapter III of Part II should be read: Begin with the middle of the first paragraph, "He had always determined..." and continue through the fifth paragraph, "...and none spoke of the things which were nearest his heart.")

Much of Doyle's narrative about Mormonism is accurate...particularly the brief part describing the growth of the community, its general prospering, and the construction of the great Temple. But much more is inaccurate:

1. The Mormons never made conversion to their faith a condition for giving or withholding help, or even for joining their community. Especially would they never have denied assistance to anyone so much in need as were Ferrier and Lucy the day they were found.

2. The Danite Band or "Avenging Angels" (of which Drebber and Stangerson were supposedly members) had its origin in fact, but was no longer even in existence at the time of the Morman exodus to Utah Territory. This secret militia-type society had been a part of the Church's activities during its Illinois and Missouri periods, around 1838, and had, even at that time, been condemned by the main body of the Church.

3. It was not true that Mormons could never marry Gentiles. There was no punishment at any time for marriage to a non-believer.

We could go on indefinitely with the errors in the "Country of the Saints": errors of history, errors of geography, topography, and even climate. But we want to turn our attention to the possible reasons for the errors in religious history.

The Mormon Church throughout its brief existence had had a history of opposition and jealousy from its non-Mormon neighbors. The Mormons' prosperity (which we have already mentioned), their clannishness, and their evident belief in their position as chosen people of God...all these things contributed to this attitude on the part of the Gentiles.

Brigham Young had been one of the early Mormon missionaries to England, going there in 1839. Over 30,000 Britons were converted to Mormonism in the middle part of the nineteenth century. Over 12,000 emigrated to Utah. Anti-Mormon pamphlets were widely distributed in England for many years. Naturally, facts about polygamy, the Danites, harems, forced marriage, etc. would have been distorted and exaggerated. It was commonly believed, for instance, that Mormons stole English servant girls in a kind of religious white slavery racket.

Sir Richard Burton's book, THE CITY OF THE SAINTS, was published in 1862 and enjoyed tremendous popularity throughout Britain. It laid stress on the more bizarre and shocking aspects of Mormon life, particularly polygamy. No doubt, Conan Doyle was familiar with this account. Michael Harrison, in his book, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, tells us that the British people of 1887 would have been quite willing to believe

outlandish statements about Mormons. Misunderstandings and resentment toward the LDS were not confined, however, to Britain. Anti-Mormon feeling was prevalent in America, too, throughout the last century. For instance, the friction between the territorial governors and the Mormon leaders can be traced to these prevailing attitudes. Bitterness, unfairness, and misrepresentation marked the territorial government of Utah until statehood.

A few historians go as far as to say that Mormonism ranked next to slavery as the most worrisome issue in American politics during the nineteenth century. It is true that it was an issue at the organization of the Republican Party in 1854. In the campaign of John Fremont, the first Republican presidential candidate, in 1856, there was featured a banner which read: "The Abolishment of Slavery and Polygamy: the Twin Relics of Barbarism!"

The notorious incident known as the Mountain Meadow Massacre which took place in 1857 further enforced anti-Mormon sentiment.

All these things contributed to Conan Doyle's portrayal of the LDS in A STUDY IN SCARLET. We must remember, too, that Doyle held his Holmesian stories in little esteem, comparatively speaking, and would not necessarily have considered factual accuracy to be an important ingredient.

I am indebted to Ron De Waal's BIBLIOGRAPHY (and to its author) for the available material on this subject. There is a wealth of it, all fascinating. The authors are sometimes in disagreement with each other. The most delightfully written paper, I think, was Margaret Marshall's "Alkali Dust in Your Eyes," from THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, autumn issue of 1968. Ms. Marshall points out, in a wry and humorous style, the various errors, historical and geographical, in A STUDY IN SCARLET. As a former Mormon, however, she declined to offer what she calls a "case for the defense." Instead, she leaves the reader with a conceit impossible to top: "...I rest content with a reflection that pleases me very much. Both Sir Arthur and Brigham Young believed staunchly in the afterlife, and I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. I am sure that they have met long since...neither would have wanted to miss the other...and I think I can count on Brigham to take care of himself."

At the Arapahoe County 4H Canine Capers, held July 22, 1976, at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds, Kathy Ake won First Place for Costume as "Sherlock Holmes and Unknown Dog Detective." Kathy, who is Mary Ake's daughter, was President of the Canine Capers group which trains dogs in obedience. She is proud of her prize-winning Briard, whose name is Brie. (Picture by David Ake.)

A Reconsideration of Dr. John H. Watson's Encounter With a Jezail Bullet

By PHILIP FRANKLIN WAGLEY, MD

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Introduction

The charismatic Sherlock Holmes had as his Boswell the now famous Dr. John H. Watson. Several mysteries surround the latter's own life, and among them was his type of wound while in the East, prior to his return to London and his first meeting with the great detective. Much has been written about Watson's injury suffered "at the fatal battle of Maiwand."[1] Christopher Morley concluded, "And Dr. Watson's wound from the Jezail bullet—was it in his shoulder or was it in his leg? Apparently, Sir Arthur (Conan Doyle) was not quite sure."

Drs. Reginald Fitz, Roland Hammond and others have discussed and attempted to explain apparent contradictions appearing in the "Canon" relative to the battle accident.[2,3]

DRAWING OF DR. WATSON'S POSITION while administering aid and line of bullet's path, indicated by pathology described in text. *(Artwork by Claude Brooks.)*

The purpose of this paper is to establish a hypothesis that there *are* no such discrepancies by offering a logical explanation for the type of injury and its after effects.

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First, let us reconstruct Dr. Watson's role at the battle on July 27, 1880. He was 28 at the time, and new to his responsibilities on the field of battle. Having been "removed" from the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, he was acting as a frontline Surgeon for the Berkshires 66th Foot, actually administering emergency first-aid to those who had fallen. Thus, it is logical to assume he would kneel while attending the wounded—and while doing so face the "murderous Ghazis" to be alert to new and personal danger.

A drawing (Figure 1) shows a natural pose under those conditions. In the drawing is depicted the hypothetical path of a Jezail bullet that could have been fired by one of Ayub Khan's horde, shattering the left clavicle and ricocheting through the medial and fleshy part of the left thigh. The first injury would be extremely painful—spraying bone spicules into the area of the brachial plexus and subclavian vessels. Injury to the brachial plexus would account for the temporary awkwardness in use of the left arm, as noted by Sherlock Holmes when he first met his future companion and biographer. We know from a later encounter with Killer Evans in the apartment of Mr. Nathan Garrideb that a very superficial grazing wound of the thigh did not pain Dr. Watson much.

Certainly a ricocheting bullet could pass close to the left femoral artery without eliciting the agony of a compound fracture of the clavicle. Symptoms of the latter injury would overshadow the former clinically; however, the combination did necessitate Watson's orderly, Murray, carrying him from the field immediately. Fortunately, a pack-horse was available for emergency evacuation to the British lines and the young physician, destined for fame, survived.

Many young athletes with injured clavicles rapidly heal the bone without long-lasting sequellae. Dr. Watson's convalescence was delayed by "enteric fever." However, he makes the point that, prior to this complication, he had already improved "So far as to be able to walk about the wards." In other words, as would be expected, the leg injury caused much less difficulty acutely than the bone trauma to the shoulder girdle.

Unfortunately, as the years passed, the old injury to the leg began to dominate the clinical picture. This is evident in several well recorded episodes. We know Holmes and Watson—in their earlier years together—would stroll about as long as three hours at a time. Such "evening rambles" preceded their meetings with Dr. Percy Trevelyan and the villain Charles Augustus Milverton. The fact they "strolled" suggests the walk was a slow one.

When able to control his own pace (and in pleasant weather) Watson could walk for miles, as he recorded soon after arriving in the tragic environs of Baskerville Hall. However, when rushing to follow Mr. Grant in attempting to solve the mystery of *The Yellow Face* Watson "stumbled after him." In *The Sign of the Four* several references suggest the leg injury was becoming more incapacitating. When agitated with Holmes' remarks about Watson's late brother, the physician—"Sprang from my chair and limped impatiently about the room." Holmes questioned whether Watson's "leg" would allow him to follow Toby, the mongrel dog, very far and commented on the "limp" he had developed. How might such pathology have evolved?

A Jezail bullet ricocheting through the left thigh muscles near the femoral artery before the vessel passes from the medial side of the femur deep and behind the bone would cause excessive hemorrhage into the tissue with subsequent cicatrization. As the years passed, such an injury could have led to contraction around and narrowing of the vessel. A decreased blood supply to the more distal portion of the leg would result. Thus, intermittent claudication would occur and only one leg would be involved—as noted repeatedly by Holmes.

Furthermore, the transient pain on walking, due to femoral artery narrowing, is located typically much lower in the leg—that is in the gastrocnemius-soleus muscles. As it is from these muscles the Achilles tendon arises, Holmes' specific comment of a "damaged tendo Achilles" is a logical one, indicating the location of the ischemic pain experienced by Watson.

Such an injury need not prevent short runs by the doctor, for time is required to create an oxygen deficit in such muscles. As Watson wrote in *Hound of the Baskervilles:* "I am reckoned fleet of foot, but he outpaced me." Although, while still young, he considered himself a "fair runner" and "in good condition," he could not catch Seldon but he could "rush round the angle of the house" in *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*, and when there was the possibility of being arrested as a suspect for the murder of Milverton he could, in his fear, run further.

Moreover, as he stated, the frightening events of that night had occurred many years earlier—possibly before narrowing of the left femoral artery had progressed.

Undoubtedly contributing factors to this intermittent claudication were the smoking of "shag" or "ships" and indulging in an atherogenic diet. Holmes mentions the "ham and eggs" Mrs. Hudson prepared for breakfast and the grouse to be eaten in *The Sign of the Four*. The dinner to entertain the *Noble Bachelor* consisted of woodcock, pheasant and pate-de-foie-gras pie. All represent pleasant ways of decreasing one's arterial capacitance!

Summary

In conclusion, there are no discrepancies in any of the pertinent comments by Holmes and Watson that cannot be explained by this hypothesis. There was only one Jezail shot that did the damage. Young Watson's posture accounts for injury in both the shoulder girdle and leg simultaneously.

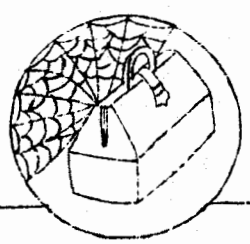
Acutely the shattered clavicle and brachial plexus involvement overshadowed clinically the soft tissue damage to the left lower appendage, but in later years --with perivascular cicatrization and atherosclerotic changes of the left femoral artery--circulation to the lower portion of the leg became limited. When walking or running long distances, or even by sitting in certain positions, the blood flow would become temporarily inadequate, causing ischemic leg pain.

Therefore, we can continue to have faith in the "Canon." In the words of St. Augustine, as quoted by H. L. Mencken, "Quid es enim fides, nisi credere quod non vides?" ("What is faith, save to believe what you do not see?")[4]

References

1. Baring-Gould, W.S.: The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, C.N. Potter Publisher, 1967.
2. Dakin, D. M.: A Sherlock Holmes Commentary, Drake Publishers, 1972.
3. VanLiere, E. J.: Dr. John H. Watson and the Subclavian Steal, Arch. Int. Med. 118, pp.245-248, 1966.
4. Mencken, H. L.: A New Dictionary of Quotations, A. A. Knopf Publisher, 1952.

A RECONSIDERATION OF DR. JOHN H. WATSON'S ENCOUNTER WITH A JEZAIL BULLET first appeared in the Maryland State Medical Journal in December, 1976. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author and the illustrator. Dr. Philip Wagley is an M.D. in private practice. Claude Brooks is with the Health Education Center of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, State of Maryland. They are both members of The Six Napoleons of Baltimore.



From Donald Redmond, photocopy of an item in the Kingston, Ontario Whig-Standard, reporting the death of Sherlock Holmes at the Kingston General Hospital:

ON THE DEATH OF MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES
KINGSTON, ONTARIO, 27 FEBRUARY 1977

This man is dead. The legend-famous name
In cold print buried on the casual page
Unfurls its newsprint banner in my hand,
All unexpected as the trump of doom.
Who was he, brother, son, whose family came
So many, earlier to that narrow cage
That welcomes him now to its frozen land?
For that name has no stone sufficient
room.
He should have borne it proudly; did he
care
That thousands did not know him, unaware
Of great tradition lent to his baptism;
Was Baker Street concocted in his chrism?
Now bid him vale, all you followers of
Holmes;
His name is still immortal in these tomes.

A CHECKLIST OF THE ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE COLLECTION IN THE METROPOLITAN TORONTO LIBRARY. Second edition. Compiled by Donald A. Redmond. 1977. 176 pages. The CHECKLIST is available from the Business Office of the Metropolitan Toronto Library, 214 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R3, at $15 per copy.

Redmond says: "The more one studies the Canon, the more appears still untouched and open to scholarly investigation. It is extraordinary that so many--novices one must presume them to be--attack the same and obvious topics over and over again. (Plug: Indexes to the Sherlockian literature, available at reasonable prices, from Julian Wolff and the Toronto Metropolitan Library.) Less than half the unpublished cases have been solved, not to mention hundreds of items on which Baring-Gould did not provide annotations. Now if I could only find a paying job working on this line..."

TO JOHN H. WATSON, M.D.

by Ronald B. De Waal

I would like to offer a toast to Dr. John H. Watson, who, as all good Sherlockians know, recorded not only fifty-six of Sherlock Holmes's cases, but also numerous others that still remain in his elusive tin dispatch-box. Sherlockians have paid tribute to Watson's Sacred Writings in countless articles and books. Tonight, however, mention should be made of yet other, perhaps more palatable, ways in which the good doctor has been honored.

Several restaurants, a hotel and motel, a bookstore, four pipe and tobacco shops, a manufacturer of burglar alarm systems, five real estate companies, and even a pet detective agency have been named after the Master Detective. While not as numerous, Watson has received similar recognition.

In 1965, under the sponsorship of the Maiwand Jezails, a reading room at Wayne State University Library was named John H. Watson. The ribbon cutter at the dedication was Basil Rathbone!

At least three scion societies have used Watson's name--we trust, not in vain! The first, now defunct, called itself The Watsonian Society of St. Louis; the second, our own, Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients; the third, and most recent, The Wastrels of Watson (Baton Rouge, Louisiana).

A London coffee house was called My Dear Watson. During the past five years, three Philadelphia restaurants each have opened with the name Dr. Watson's Pub. A bar in London's Sherlock Holmes Hotel is named the Dr. Watson Room. The hotel publicizes the room as follows: "Dr. Watson is given to indulging himself with a brandy and soda for 'remedial' purposes. In Dr. Watson's Bar you can sample the pleasures of our Sherlock Holmes or Dr. Watson cocktail specialities. Whatever your taste, remedial measures are on hand amidst intimate surroundings." More recently, a new restaurant in Copenhagen named Baker Street features a Dr. Watson's Bar.

And what about the items listed on some of the menus that refer to Watson? Greeley, Colorado's new Baker Street Restaurant & Pub features, on its dessert menu, "Dr. Watson's Prescription." A luncheon plate at Santa Monica's former Sherlock Holmes restaurant was called "The Doctor Watson," and its dinner menu included "Dr. Watson's Duet--Steak 'n Clams." One of the libations from the Criterion Bar in Woodland Hill's Scotland Yard restaurant is "Irish Coffee (Dr. Watson's Private Recipe)." In Sherlock's on Sheppard in Toronto you will find "Dr. Watson's Chicken Pot Pie" and "Watson Weiners." Finally, "Watsonburgers" and "Dr. Watson's Special Dressing" are served in Philadelphia's Dr. Watson's Pubs.

Let us now raise our glasses to the greatest doctor in or out of literature, with the expectation that he will continue to receive such gastronomical and other honors. Perhaps the day may even come when the "Watsonburger" will replace the "Big Mac" as America's number one hamburger!

"Watson doesn't understand me."

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE EYESIGHT OF "BIRDY" EDWARDS

by Harald Curjel

When a person wears spectacles permanently, the causes are generally:

1. Opthalmological Necessity. Most commonly:

a. Short Sight (Myopia)...the inability to see distant objects clearly.
b. Long Sight (Hypermetropia)...the inability to see near objects clearly.
c. Astigmatism...when the patient is unable, without eyestrain, to bring the vertical and horizontal components of an object to a comfortable focus.

or

2. The Need to Assume a Disguise. In this case only spectacles with plain lenses need to be worn.

It is my contention that Jack McMurdo (alias "Birdy" Edwards of Pinkerton's) during his brave and dangerous exposure of the Scowrers, had normal eyesight but wore plain-lensed spectacles as a simple and effective disguise. In the story we are reminded so often and so pointedly of McMurdo's spectacles that I feel that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had a very special reason for this repetition. I think he is giving us a clue and saying, "Watch this young man very closely...he may well prove to be someone quite different!"

Thus

i. When we first meet the young Irishman on the train on the way to Vermissa, we are told that he has large, shrewd, humorous grey eyes which twinkle inquiringly from time-to-time as he looks round through his spectacles at the people about him... Also, it is easy to see that he is of a sociable and possibly simple disposition.

ii. A little later, when still on the train, his grey eyes gleamed with a sudden and dangerous anger from behind his glasses.

iii. During his first meeting with Bodymaster McGinty in Lodge 341, Vermissa Valley, the young stranger's bold grey eyes looked back fearlessly through their glasses at the deadly black ones which turned sharply upon him.

A few minutes later, he was offering to fight Ted Baldwin "with fists...or any way he chooses." If McMurdo had been permanently dependent upon his glasses, he would not lightly have entered into fisticuffs. The high myope, besides being at a visual disadvantage in a fight, is a candidate for detachment of the retina if his larger-than-normal eyeball is struck by a fist.

iv. During the initiation ceremony in the Lodge, his coat was removed and later returned to him, but we are told nothing about his glasses. These must have been removed before the blindfolding because he felt two hard points in front of his eyes, pressing upon them.

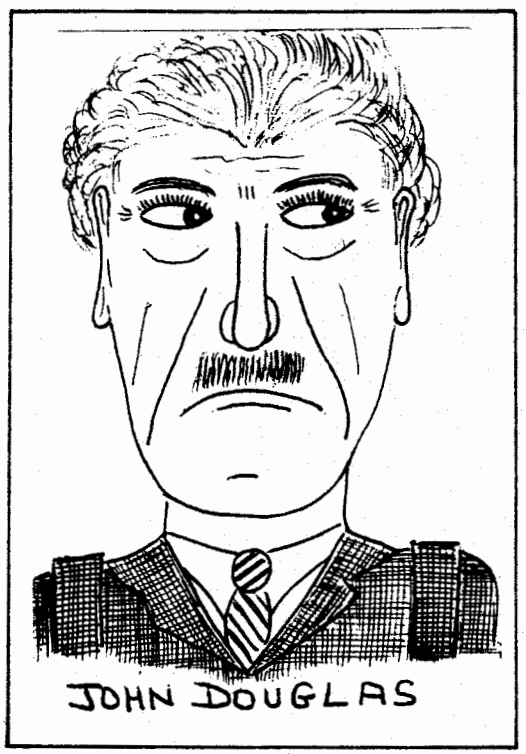
v. At the time of the final showdown (surely one of the greatest denouements of all time in detective fiction?), his eyes shone with fierce excitement behind his spectacles. Immediately after, reference is made to the stern blue (unspectacled) eyes of Captain Marvin of the Coal and Iron Police gleaming behind the sights of his revolver. I feel that Sir Arthur is giving us our final clue--"There you are...I told you to watch this man carefully!"

After the trial and sentencing of the Scowrers, Birdy Edwards lived in Chicago and presumably continued to work for Pinkerton's. We have no record in the Canon during this period as to whether he continued to wear his spectacles.

When Ted Baldwin and the Willabys came out of prison, Edwards went to California under an assumed name. After a third attempt on his life and the death of his beautiful wife, he joined forces with Cecil Barker (whom we are told had a pair of "masterful black eyes") and for five years they prospered in their gold-mining venture in Benito Canyon.

My study of old prints and photographs suggests that the typical prospector of those days was bearded, slouch-hatted and roughly clad, and that spectacles were not commonly worn. Cecil Barker tells us that Douglas "would never go where other men were if he could help it." I suggest that "Birdy" Edwards finally discarded his spectacles during this period because he realized that the very disguise which had hitherto proved so effective now made him conspicuous in the California goldfields.

We now come to the stage setting for the last act but one of the drama...the village of Birlstone. When "Birdy"



Edwards lived in Vermissa, Sir Arthur emphasized his glasses, but now, I suggest, he tells us just as clearly that John Douglas, the Sussex squire, had exceptionally good unaided eyesight.

Thus

i. The introductory description of him says that he had "peculiarly keen grey eyes"...no mention of spectacles nor of "puckered forehead, peering expression and rounded shoulders."

ii. While a resolute myope could distinguish himself by entering a burning vicarage, I suggest that a man with normal eyesight has a distinct advantage in this respect.

iii. His distant vision must have been excellent. He recognized Ted Baldwin in a street in Tunbridge Wells ("It was only a glimpse, but I have a quick eye for these things..."), spotted the toe of his boot beneath the curtain in dim light conditions, and immediately plunged into a life-and-death struggle. One of Ted Baldwin's last earthly thoughts must have been, "Why isn't that b....d McMurdo wearing his glasses?"

iv. Douglas must have had exceptional near vision for a man in his fifties. He was able to do close work in a very poor light in the "priest's hole." "...I've been cooped up for two days and I've spent the daylight hours...as much daylight as I could get in that rat-trap...in putting the thing into words."

v. If "Birdy" Edwards was a permanently be-spectacled man, he would only have been positively identified by the Scowrers of Vermissa, by the gold-miners of Benito Canyon, and by the villagers of Birlstone, when wearing his spectacles.

When faking his death, Douglas and Cecil Barker would have had to make certain that some fragments of glass and metal were left "planted" near the shattered head of Ted Baldwin. The fact that they did not must surely indicate that, in trying to deceive the villagers of Birlstone into believing that Jack Douglas

was dead, no such incriminating fragments were left because they and the local police remembered the Squire as a non-spectacled man.

vi. I think that "Birdy" Edwards was not looking very far ahead when he said, "If they saw in the papers that Baldwin had got his man, there would be an end of all my troubles." Whether Professor Moriarty had a hand in it or not, it was only a matter of time before the surviving Scowrers in the U.S.A. realized that, when Ted Baldwin did not return, his mission had ended in failure, and the man-hunt would inevitably have been resumed.

So much for Canonical fact. Now we come to historical fact which, by the unique tradition of Sherlockian scholarship, must take its place after, though if possible fit into, Canonical fact. I must express my very grateful thanks to Mr. George F. O'Neill, the Director of Personnel of Pinkerton's in New York, who has gone to a great deal of trouble to give me the following facts:

a. He reminds me that "The Valley of Fear" was based on a real case when the criminal activities of a gang called "The Mollie Maguires", in Pennsylvania in the 1870's were successfully dealt with by Pinkerton's. Their investigator, who infiltrated the gang as did McMurdo with the Scowrers, was named McParland, and he used the alias of J. McKenna. Another Pinkerton Agent was seconded to the local police force (as was "Captain Teddy Marvin" to the Coal and Iron Police in Vermissa) for the duration of the case.

b. Mr. O'Neill says, "Research into the physical standards of employment in the 1870's shows that no eye tests or any kind of physical examinations were given. Employment application forms inquire into the applicant's health and physical disabilities. No reference is made to precluding an applicant because of corrected vision."

c. Mr. James Horan's fascinating book, "The Pinkertons: A Detective Agency That Made History," also is a mine of information about Mr. McParland. It suggests to me that he had normal eyesight when a young man but wore glasses, probably for the normal hypermetropia of middle age, in later life.

i. Before joining Pinkerton's, Mr. McParland is recorded as having held nine different jobs. Of these, the occupations of "teamster", "deckhand", "lumberman" and "policeman" suggest that a man with defective eyesight would not have chosen them.

ii. On page 209, we are given a pretty complete description of his physical characteristics, and there is no mention of spectacles.

iii. On page 210, we are told that "a fight followed in which McKenna (McParland) beat Frazier to his knees in five rounds..." (cf. McMurdo's offer to fight Ted Baldwin.) I feel that this is not the action of a man with markedly defective eyesight.

iv. On page 209, there is a picture of McParland undoubtedly wearing glasses. While his hair and moustache are still un-greyed, there is considerable temporal recession of his hair, and I would suggest that he would have been in his forties when this picture was taken. At this age he could well have needed reading glasses.

v. On page 236, we are told that, "after a long period of convalescence (his ordeal had lasted some 2 1/2 years) Mr. McParland became the Superintendent of the Denver Branch of the Agency." In 1906 (page 465) he is described as being "sprucely dressed, about sixty. He had a fine walrus moustache, wore gold-rimmed spectacles..." and later as "a gentle, soft-voiced old man." On page 458 there is a picture of Mr. McParland in Denver wearing his glasses.

My conclusions are

a. That in later years Mr. McParland undoubtedly wore spectacles.

b. That in his younger years there is no direct evidence that he needed to wear glasses, and the indications are that he did not.

c. That none of the historical facts refute my theory that the fictional Jack McMurdo also had normal eyesight when a young man.

References

1. The Golden Pince-Nez
2. The Final Problem

From the Denver POST, March 17, 1977:

Fourth Race at Centennial track Sunday. Quarter horse 2-year-old maidens, 300 yards, $800 purse. Winner, No Sherlock, paying $5.40 on $2 bet. Rider? Watson, of course. Elementary.

DENVER CALABASH GOES ON THE ROAD

Neglected Patients attending the January dinner were pleased by the appearance of the Master Detective himself, in complete traditional dress including calabash. This surrogate Holmes turned out to be new member, David Lauer, recently arrived in Denver from New York, who told an amusing story about his pipe:

"...One day I was walking to an appointment in downtown Denver when my eye caught an attractive calabash pipe in the window of a tobacco store. As I had for some time been interested in purchasing just such a pipe, I entered and in no time was engaged in a pleasant conversation with the amiable proprietor, Mr. Glen Larson. The topic of our chat moved naturally from pipes to Sherlock Holmes. He informed me that some time earlier Leonard Nimoy had been in the shop to purchase a pipe almost identical to the one I now held in my hand. At the time, Mr. Larson dutifully informed his illustrious customer that Holmes never actually smoked a calabash, but usually used briar or clay. Mr. Nimoy admitted his knowledge of that fact but explained that the audience, in his opinion, expected to see nothing less than the calabash. And furthermore, because of its size, it was more easily visible than a briar or clay. So impressed with the calabash was Mr. Nimoy that he purchased a second one for his private use. As the pipes were being placed in a bag, Nimoy asked that they both be charged to the production, since a spare might be required for the play. As he said this, Mr. Larson noticed the shadow of a smile cross the hawklike countenance and, although not quite sure, believed that for a moment the left eyebrow had been slightly raised."

SHERLOCK KNOCKS

A Work of Art—and functional, too! Solid bronze, original, hand-finished, 9½" × 7" *door-knocker* by William Cordiner. Sherlock Holmes's profile in relief for outside of door with bronze bee on bolt for inside. Actual-size picture on request. $75.00 includes tax, U.S. mailing, insurance, and handling. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

Mrs. W. P. Blake,
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THOUGHTS ON A VICTORIAN BUTTER-DISH

by Nancy Wynne

"Our chambers were always full of chemicals and of criminal relics, which had a way of turning up in the butter-dish, or in even less desirable places."

The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual

It was an unseasonably warm February afternoon that the Out-Patients met recently to discuss The Musgrave Ritual. We were ruminating on the various household descriptions and Sherlockian eccentricities that are provided in this story. This is the tale that tells us, for instance, about the tastefully designed bullet-hole pattern which adorned one wall of 221B; the cigars-in-the-coal-scuttle and the tobacco-in-the-toe-of-the-Persian-slipper secrets are both divulged here; and so is Sherlock's quaint practice of affixing his correspondence to the mantelpiece with a jackknife. In short, The Musgrave Ritual is a veritable treasure trove of those little Sherlockianisms which we hold so dear.

To return to the butter-dish: Most of us, I'll wager, on reading the butter-dish paragraph quoted above, tend to picture in our mind's eye a bowl actually containing butter, slightly melting perhaps, with a tiny vial of sulphuric acid untidily tilted over it, and maybe a spent bullet or two reposing on the oily mass.

I considered this picture carefully on that February afternoon, and soon discarded it. Why, not even Sherlock Holmes could have been that unsanitary! And immediately there came to my mind another picture: the diningroom of my grandparents' home in Missouri, circa 1936. It was a farmhouse built in the 1870's. The diningroom was the largest room in the house and the center of family activity. Homework, card games, sewing, mending, ironing, whittling...everything you can possibly think of took place in that pleasant room with its huge pot-bellied stove and its comfortable oak table which could seat twenty-four people at one time. On that table two items were kept at all times: one, a wooden bowl full of black walnuts; the other, a Victorian butter-dish which was used as a catch-all for pencils, pens, a thimble, spools of thread, shoelaces, a penknife, lost buttons, dominoes...you name it. This butter-dish was not a small rectangular or oblong piece of china or plastic made to accomodate a stick of butter from the grocery store. It was large and round, with a dome-like cover, and was made to hold a two-pound mound of butter from the cow out in the barnyard. My grandmother had two of these butter-dishes, one which was actually used for butter, and one which was used for anything that "had a way of wandering into unlikely positions."

Undoubtedly, the household at 221B Baker Street was similarly equipped. The butter-dish referred to in The Musgrave Ritual was Mrs. Hudson's second-best, and never held butter. The butter-dish which she brought to her boarders' room on their breakfast and tea trays each day was a wholly separate entity, and we can rest assured that it was returned to the kitchen regions after each meal, there to be thoroughly washed...just in case a stray chemical or criminal relic did chance to wander there. After all, one cannot be too careful in such matters. And Mrs. Hudson did know her lodgers well.

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