

Volume 4, Numbers 3 & 4

Sept. - Dec., 1978

AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND MAGIC

Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients celebrated his birthday (in his absence, as usual, alas!) on September twentyfourth at Beckett's Pub in Littleton/ Southglenn. The evening began with a buffet of munchies and much frivolous conversation, followed by dinner. The first toast of the evening was given by Gordon Milliken -- to the Reichenbach Fall. This toast was both unexpected and the highlight of the evening. More conventional - if less fervent toasts were offered; "Happy Birthday" was sung; and a brief business meeting was held, during which the proposed by-laws were distributed and an election committee formed.

Then came the music - and the rest of the magic. Kathy DeFrancis, musician, and Steve Aldrich, magician, gave an unusual and delightful combination performance. It cannot be easy to juggle to music-or to play guitar and sing while someone is throwing things around! "Music hall" music, juggling and magic tricks comprised the first half of the show; following a brief intermission, Patients were treated to a Sherlockian--or Doylian--show devised especially for them. Conan Doyle's friendship with the great Harry Houdini inspired a display of one of Houdini's classic escapes from a straitjacket. Though Doyle chose to believe that Houdini made at least some of his escapes by dematerializing, Steve Aldrich was seen to make his escape on the purely corporeal level. How he performed those

tricks during the seance is, of course, anybody's guess! The seance was an attempt to summon the spirit of Dr. Watson, who didn't show up, not being dead. But something lit the candle, played the tambourine, threw the shoe . . . Sir Arthur's interest in spiritualism was also reflected in a mind-reading act; Kathy DeFrancis did the reading. The evening concluded with applause, farewells, and friendly accusations of collusion, leveled primarily at Mike Stander, who had helped fasten the straitjacket, and Mary Ake, who had guarded envelopes while Kathy read minds. Some Patients have no faith.

Kathy DeFrancis and Steve Aldrich have performed at Touchstone, Spree, D-S-O-marathon, and local clubs. Their act is unique; had he been there, Dr. Watson would have loved it.



ANNUAL DINNER

The 5th annual dinner of Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients celebrating the 125th birthday of Mr. Sherlock Holmes will be held on January 6, 1979 at the Phipps Mansion, Denver, Colorado. Entertainment will be provided by "The Patients' Players".

by Harald Curjel

The object of this paper is to paint a little more on our backcloth of Victorian times by listing the references to the Royal Navy in the Canonical stories.

Before the beginning of the Great Partnership, Dr. Watson himself had contact with the Royal Navy. He says, "I was despatched, accordingly, in the troopship "ORONTES" and landed a month later on Portsmouth jetty, with my health irretrievably ruined . . . Until 1898 the military transport service which served the needs of the rapidly increasing Victorian overseas Empire was part of the Royal Navy and the ships flew the White Ensign. The Troopship Jetty was part of the Royal Naval Dockyard at Portsmouth. Rudyard Kipling refers to it in his poem "Troopin'" . . . "They'll turn us out at Portsmouth Wharf in cold an' wet an' rain . . ."

After 1898, the military transport service was run by the Merchant Navy and the ships flew the Blue Ensign, Southampton being the main port.

After Watson's chilly return to England (W. S. Baring-Gould tells us that the date of arrival of the "ORONTES" was November 26th 1880) I think our next remembrance will be Arthur Charpentier, Sub Lieutenant in Her Majesty's Navy. His widowed mother's struggles to keep her son in the Service must command our respect and we are reminded of the meagre pay of the junior officers of the period. The Charpentiers, in spite of being in reduced circumstances, were clearly regarded as proper gentry by Inspector Gregson who punctiliously called the head of the household "Madame." It may well be that the family were Channel Islanders.

Two small points concerning Arthur Charpentier still puzzle me:

a. Why was a "stout oak cudget" so readily available in the umbrella stand in

- Torquay Terrace? Hardly the sort of thing to find in a respectable Camberwell house.
- b. Why was he so cagey about his long walk and the name of the shipmate?

 Jefferson Hope tells us that Drebber sought sanctuary in his cab at the end of Torquay Terrace so no further confrontation was possible.

Arthur Charpentier may well have gone to "walk off" his ill temper but why need he have been so reticent about it?

Next, comes the Commissionaire whom Holmes spotted across the street as "a retired Sergeant of Marines." Before 1918 the Royal Marines (affectionately known as the "Jollies") were divided into two regiments:

a. The Royal Marine Light Infantry (to which our commissionaire had belonged)

This was a sea-going light infantry regiment, descendant of those light infantrymen in whom Wellington put such trust in the Peninsula War. Marching at the light infantry pace of 160 paces to the minute (as compared with the 120 paces of the infantry of the Line) the R.M.L.I. provided a highly professional, quick-moving landing party. In full dress they were a red tunic and were colloquially called the "Red Marines."

b. The Royal Marine Artillery (the "Blue Marines")

This was mainly an artillery regiment, which manned some of the ship's gunturrets when afloat and coast defense batteries ashore. In full dress they wore blue uniform with the artilleryman's broad red stripe down the trousers.

The Royal Marines today still wear, in full dress, the white helmet which is the lineal descendent of the "solar topee of the last century.

It is tempting to suggest that the Major Freebody, who was "in command of one of the forts upon Portsdown Hill" (behind







Portsmouth) and was acting as host to John Openshaw's father (Five) at the time of his death, was a "Blue Marine," but the Historical Section of the Royal Marines will not allow this and say that the Portsdown Hill Forts were manned by the Royal Artillery.

Julia Stoner (Speck) had been engaged to a half-pay Major of Marines, whom she met when staying with her aunt near Harrow.

In "Bruce" we are told that the complicated plans were so closely guarded that "if the Chief Constructor of the Navy desired to consult them even he was forced to go to the Woolwich Office for the purpose." "Double valves with automatic self adjusting slots" are tricky things! The Chief Constructor would have been the Head of the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors. This body was responsible for the planning and design of new warships and the maintenance of those in service. While its members usually wore plain clothes, when they embarked in warships and went to sea, they wore the uniform of naval officers of relative rank but with silver-grey cloth between the gold rings.

An "Admiral Sinclair" is mentioned in this case and we are told that he entertained Sir James Walter, Head of the Submarine Department, at his house in Barclay Square on the evening of the theft. (I think that "Barclay Square" is probably a mis-print, phonetic in origin, for 'Berkeley Square'"). I visualize him as a bluff, simple sea-dog, who no doubt was in end horrified at the perfidy of Colonel Valentine Walter.

I am confident that Mr. Fowler, the steadfast fiancé of the unfortunate Alice Rucastle (Copp) was a naval officer. The beard and the grey suit (the choice when in plain clothes of the sea officer) smacks of either the Royal or Merchant Navy. Holmes says, "But Mr. Fowler, being a persevering man, as a good seaman should be, blockaded the house. . . " I think the word

"blockaded" tips the balance in favour of the Royal Navy. Furthermore, we are told that Mr. Fowler (his rank must have been below that of Commander for him to be referred to as "Mister") after his retirement, became the "holder of a Covernment appointment in the Island of Mauritius." While it is perfectly possible for a retired officer of the Merchant Navy to hold such an appointment, I think it is more likely that the holder would have come from the Royal Navy.

There are no naval personalities in "Nava." We are merely told that the little cylinder of blue-grey paper contained a secret treaty between Great Britain and Italy. Voilà tout.

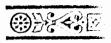
In "Scan." Watson tells us that Holmes went to Trincomalee to clear up the "singular tragedy of the Atkinson Brothers." Commander Stavert R.N., in a paper read to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London in September 1976, suggests that the actual "tragedy" involved two members of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who were in garrison at the time.

Trincomalee was a splendid, wellprotected, deep-water port on the NE coast of Ceylon (now SriLanka) which has long been the base for the Royal Navy in these waters, so Holmes must have come into contact with this Service during his visit.

Finally we come to the very complete account of Holmes' own close contact with the Royal Navy which is given in such detail in his final case "His Last Bow."

For two years, starting in August 1912, Holmes had been working for Naval Intelligence in the role of the disgruntled Irish-American Altamont. For much of this time, I think, he was based in Portsmouth living in lodgings in Frattan. This is a suburb lying between the naval town of Portsmouth and the seaside resort of Southsea. We recall how Dr. Watson, on a hot August day in Baker Street, yearned for the shingle of Southsea. Dr. Conan Doyle





himself set up his first medical practice in a house near Southsea Front.

While Holmes' true identity must have been known to Naval Intelligence I suspect that he was unknown to the Portsmouth City Police. This enabled him to melt into the background of the port and to mingle freely with the traitors and German agents. He successfully double-crossed five of these . . . Jack James, Hollis and Steiner being named . . . and they were arrested while he fed false information to the others.

However, by mid July 1914, it looks as though he was on the verge of being in trouble with the police for, as he told Von Bork, "My landlady down Fratton way had some inquiries and when I heard of it I guessed it was time for me to hustle." We can imagine Holmes going down to Portsmouth Hard, identifying himself to the Police at the Dockyard Gate and placing himself under the cover of Naval Intelligence with his work nearly done.

The book on bee-keeping had to be tied up convincingly in brown paper, the telegram drafted and arrangements made for it to be sent from Portsmouth at midday on Sunday August 2nd, and a bottle of chloroform and a sponge obtained from the Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar.

Finally, I maintain that Holmes took passage to Harwich in one of the ships of the 1st Destroyer Flotilla, 1st Home Fleet. This flotilla later became famous as the "Harwich Force," and it is known that the ships were gathered in Harwich by the time war was declared on 4th August.

The final act of the drama now begins and I think the key to it lies in Dr. Watson's heart-felt utterance "I feel 20 years younger, Holmes. I have seldom felt so happy as when I got your wire asking me to meet you at Harwich with the car."

In a paper which I wrote some years ago for the Sherlock Holmes Journal I sought to show that Von Bork's "eyrie" was located in the village of Erwarton on the north bank of the River Stout in a house called the Old Rectory (in which I lived myself for several years). While the house is not perched on a "great chalk cliff" it definitely overlooks the town of Harwich and fits in other ways.

Altamont had warned Von Bork by telegram that he "would come without fail tonight" (2nd August). The German would thus think that his agent had come by train from Portsmouth to London and then on by the East Coast Main Line to either Manningtree or Ipswich stations, either of which would have been equally convenient for Erwarton, and then on by hired car.

If Altamont had left the train at one of these main-line stations he would have told Watson to meet him there. The fact that he gave precise instructions for being picked up at Harwich (which is the terminus of a branch line from Manningtree Junction) must indicate that Holmes arrived at Harwich by sea.

All this supports my belief that he, by about Wednesday July 29th had become a marked man in the eyes of the Portsmouth City Police, that his landlady's enquiries were genuine and that he had to be smuggled away to Harwich by sea. In response to my query, the Admiralty informed me that no ship from Portsmouth actually arrived in Harwich on Sunday 2nd August, so Holmes' ship must have arrived by midnight on the Saturday at the latest.

There are three further small points which bear thinking about.

 When Altamont told Von Bork about the avaricious Gunner, he may have been telling the literal truth or merely deceiving him with a fictition story.

4



In order to expose the treachery of the Gunner it may have been necessary to use the signal-book as a temporary bait. On the other hand, a Gunner (who in Victorian days was a "Warrant Officer" . . . that is an elisted man who had risen from the Lower Deck and held his offier's rank by Royal Warrant rather than by Royal Commission) would not have needed to have access to the signal-book in the course of his professional duties, nor would he have been in overall charge of secret and confidential books.

On balance, therefore, I incline to the view that Altamont was "spinning a yarn" to Von Bork.

2. We are told that Holmes, in the process of rifling Von Bork's safe, looked hard at the corner of a tracing before putting it in the box. "This should put another bird in the cage. I had no idea that the paymaster was such a rascal." he said.

Though Holmes had long "had an eye upon him" what possible notation could he have seen on the corner of the tracing which would offer final proof of the traitor's guilt? The latter would have been hardly likely to have signed such incriminating documents with his own signature or even initials.

A "paymaster" was an officer of the Accountant and Secretarial Branch. In 1914, he would haveworn distinctive white cloth between the gold rings on his sleeve. His duties might well have included the safe-keeping of confidential and secret books.

3. Holmes' simple instruction to Mrs. Hudson "You can report to me tomorrow in London, Martha, at Claridge's Hotel. . . " opens up for me a fascinating field of speculation.

Claridge's Hotel was in 1914 and remains today probably the most exclusive and expensive hotel in London. It traditionally played host to visiting foreign Royalty, Presidents and Potentates.
The highly trained observant staff never forgot a face so it would be an odd place for a contra-espionage agent to use as a hideout. Yet Holmes, with his "horrible goatee" and a "half-smoked sodden cigar hanging from the corner of his mouth" appears to have a permanent pied a terre there during his period with Naval Intelligence.

I cannot accept the idea that he booked into Claridge's in the early hours of Monday 3rd August just as an ordinary guest and to give himself a treat after two years' strenuous work. The "little Ford" would not have left Von Bork's house till about 11 pm and would take about three hours to get to London. Then they had to go to Scotland Yard and wait there at least till the Baron Von Herling had been summoned and had arrived. It must have been the early hours of the morning before Holmes was free to seek his bed. It is out of character for him to live in grand hotels, just for the sake of luxury. It is true that he did stay in the Hotel Dulong in Lyons (Reig.) and the Englischer Hof in Meirengen (Final) but in both cases there were special reasons.

When Holmes told Mrs. Hudson that he would "look into them to-morrow" . . . referring to the final batch of addresses taken from the letters which Von Bork had posted . . . it certainly seemed to indicate that he had a permanent base in London and Claridge's is the only place mentioned. It would also have been convenient for an early visit to the bank in order to cash Von Bork's cheque . . . made out to Altamont, of course.

I am still puzzled why Claridge's was chosen. To begin with, it is out of character for the British Secret Service to be so generous in providing such expensive accommodation for its agents, when a back-street bed-sitting room might have done just as well.

It may have been that it was a case of an audacious double-bluff in that no one





would expect to find a secret agent living in Claridge's. Even so, I think that the Hall Porter and the staff at the Reception Deck must have sometimes raised discreet eyebrows as they observed the irregular comings and goings of this unusual and conspicuous figure.

Finally, why did Holmes hustle poor old Mrs. Hudson up to London so quickly, even though she admitted that she had "everything ready to leave."

I can only conclude that he was anxious to pay her off after her years of faithful and strenuous service and to see her and her cat off at Victoria Station so that they could return to peaceful villa upon the southern slope of the South Downs overlooking Fulworth. I hope that he himself was able to follow them in a few days, and no man deserved his rest and retirement more.



The conclusion of Captain Curjel's article will appear in the next issue of THE MEDICAL BULLETIN.



CANON FODDER

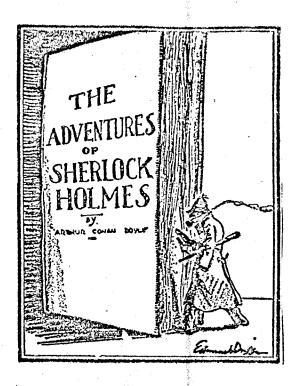
Sherlock Holmes vs. Dracula; or The Adventure of the Sanguinary Count, by John H. Watson, M.D., as Edited by Loren D. Estleman. N.Y., Doubleday, 1978 214 pages, hard cover. \$7.95.

Reviewed by "Flat-Foot"

Although slickly written in a Watsonian style, this obvious forgery attributed to Holmes' Boswell will, at best, disappoint devoted Sherlockians, whose Master declared:

"This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply." (1)







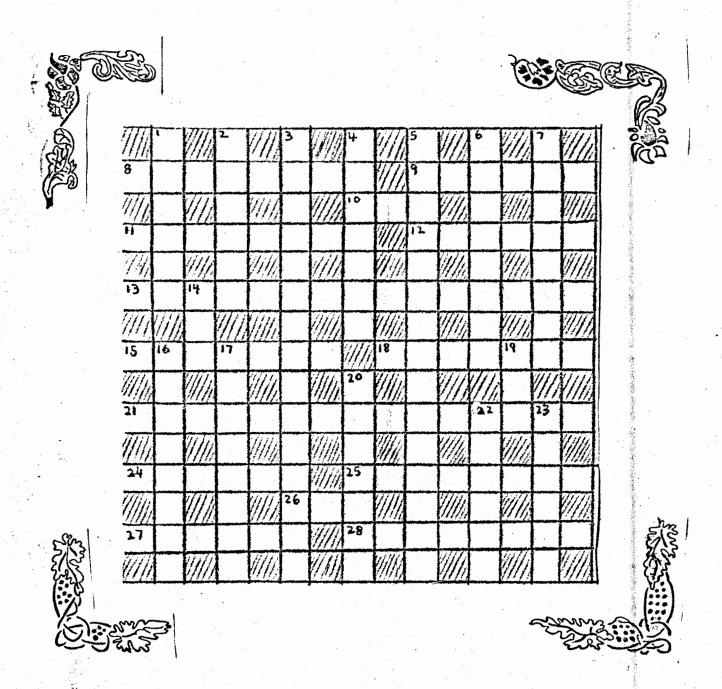
Furthermore, many serious students of the Canon will be deeply shocked; for they rightly will consider it to be a sacrilegious travesty of all they-an Holmes-- hold dear. Although a well-known critic needed less than 14 page (2) to demonstrate the falsity of another forgery (3), this new production is not even worth one page. I fact, three of the great detective's own words will serve as a complete an adequate review:

"Rubbish, Watson, rubbish!" (1)

(1) Sussex Vampire.

(3) Meyer, Nicholas. The Seven Per-Co-Solution, N.Y., Dutton, 1974.

⁽²⁾ Hall, Trevor H. Sherlock Holmes a Sigmund Freud, a Study in Forgery Ch. 2 in his Sherlock Holmes and His Creator, N.Y. St. Martins Prelip77, pp. 16-29.



ACROSS

- (8) Now the Prince's grandson can in London claim to be fourth man. (8)
- (9) While entertaining Morstan's daughter, Its smoke went bubbling through the water. (6)
- (10) Three letters standing in a line: Twenty, one and eighty-nine. (3)
- (11) From tyranny the world was rid When he was murdered in Madrid. (8)
- (12) A thing of evil some may say; I push it in three times a day. (6)
- (13) Too evil this for tongue to speak; 'Twas only uttered in a shriek. (3,8,4)
- (15) Farewell to students, fame, renown; When dark ones gathered in the town. (7)
- (18) Avenging noble beauty's shame, Too quickly this the house became. (7)
- (21) Well-known in India, not in Norway, His massive figure filled the doorway (8,7)
- (24) Like the dog, without its bite, She heard nothing in the night. (6)
- (25) It needs three shots to pull the cork; But not by them, they're in New York. (8)
- (26) It came to light when Holmes was tipped: His Norman body in the crypt. (3)
- (27) This problem won't be too distressing: A place for balance or for guessing. (6)
- (28) The crocuses should have before The end of March in '94. (8)

DOWN

- (1) Let's make this one a simple clue: Looking like the right leg's shoe. (6)
- (2) With charity in moderation, I treated for my education. (6)
- (3) Ascetic, self-contained, alert; His attitude to Holmes was curt. (6,9)
- (4) He'd witness them in pain and sorrow; And bring his father back tomorrow. (7)
- (5) With glamour and with active brain, Sinner turns to saint again. (8,7)
- (6) In Lamberley the time seems good
 To solve a case of sucking blood. (8)
- (7) One night in March, the time's icumen To do what Holmes did with a woman. (4,4)
- (14) Though struck by lightning long ago, Its height is all we need to know. (?
- (16) Lacking scrap-books and his papers, When Holmes was this he seemed ungracious. (8)
- (17) I'd gladly give you anything
 To learn the titles of the King. (8)
- (19) Gorgiano's dead or I'm a sucker; "My, oh My!" says Mrs. Lucca. (3)
- (20) Athletic, fresh-complexioned, frank;
 He toiled while others robbed the bank. (7)
- (22) Of ready missiles Holmes had few, As this was done to only two. (6)
- (23) Don't let the dog out else we're sunk!
 He cannot feed it when he's drunk.
 (6)



OF THE BAG

BOTTOM

by John Stephenson

I, the author of the above title, wish from time to time to bring to readers of Sherlock Holmes a taste of that which is mostly overlooked. We have read of Watson's wives, wounds, Sherlock's drugs, and elementary deductions, Moriarty's cleverness and lack of wrestling ability. Enough. I now present an essay on The Speckled Band.

To be exact, the essay on the serpent itself is not the story. I quite agree that I would not wish to find a speckled serpent in the bottom of Watson's bag. However, at many meetings I have had the pleasure to attend, the snake has made an appearance, and has been quickly placed back into the bag again, with only speculation as to what type of snake it is. I will not attempt at this time, nor may I attempt in some future time, to instruct you, the reader, in training a snake with the help of a saucer of milk. The only help a saucer of milk has been to me was to aid in my deduction that a cup had been spilled. Nor will I attempt to discuss the frustrations of training a snake to respond to a whistle.

The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana by Jack Tracy states--"There is no snake known as the Swamp Adder and the serpent described fits no known species, Indian or otherwise." I heartily agree that no snake is known as the Swamp Adder. disagree with the statement, "The serpent as described fits no known species, Indian or otherwise." I feel that Russell's Viper (Vipela russelii) both fits the description and is found as a species in India! I refer the reader to Venomous Animals of the World by Roger Caras, and also his book, Dangerous to Man. In these well-written books, Caras states, "Russell's Viper or the dread tic-palonga, this is the 'Speckled Band' of Sherlock Holmes fame and is one of the most seriously venomous snakes on earth. species has an enormous range and is found in India." India!

I now quote from The Speckled Band, "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." Now for some problems. Holmes states, "It is a Swamp Adder!" This could have been a local name for this snake in India or even in some of Sherlock Holmes' readings. It could possibly have been a group name common at this period in time for this snake. "The deadliest snake in India." Russell's Viper could certainly have rated that title when it is capable of delivering between 150 and 250 milligrams of venom. Caras says, "It probably would take less than 70 milligrams to kill even a very large man." Sherlock Holmes states, "He has died within ten seconds of being bitten." Here we have indeed a major discrepancy. Russell's Viper has been known to kill rather quickly. Sometimes within 15 minutes to half an hour, especially if the venom is injected by the bits into a vein.

Julia was lying down in bed and it is quite possible that the snake would have been able to deliver a like high on the torso, perhaps even into her neck. different from most of Russell's Viper victims in that the snake is generally encountered on the ground, and bites are in the lower leg area. Death would have been quick for Julia, and this would explain it. Dr. Roylott's dying within 10 seconds presents a major problem, as no venomous creature can kill within that time. I offer a speculation that Dr. Roylott died of heart failure due to extreme fright caused by the bite of a Russell's Viper. Dr. Watson, great medical man that he is, was too befuddled by the night's occurrences to recognize this possibility--"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. say that away down in the village, and





even in the distant parsonage, that cry raised the sleepers from their beds."

I invite the reader to gaze upon the Russell's Viper, his very appearance strongly suggests a Speckled Band. If then you are still unconvinced that the Russell's Viper is indeed the Speckled Band, I invite your probing hand into THE OF THE BAG.

BOTTOM



- S tand aside, Al Campion, and Sir Henry Merivale;
- H ang your heads in shame, Inspector Grant and Ellery Queen--
- E clipsed forever by the shade of him for whom no trail
- R uns too obscure or cold, his brain so shrewd and razor-keen.
- L ook to your orchids, Nero; tend your sinners, Father Brown;
- O bserve the social graces, dear Lord Peter, and retreat--
- C an't you all see clearly that YOU only play the clown?
- K now you not the Ringmaster resides in Baker Street?
- H ercule Poirot and Maigret, go your Continental way;
- O h leave us, Mr. Moto--take some tea with Charlie Chan;
- L et Alleyn, Trent, and Strangeways have a seaside holiday--
- M aybe they'll find the ocean or detect a deeper tan!
- E very sleuth of fiction, be he amateur or pro.
- S hould need no clues to spell out who's the Greatest One we know.

(But if they do, just let them search this rhyme!)

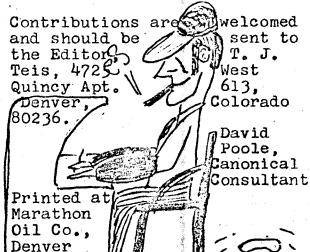
-David Pearson February 1978

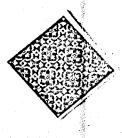


THE MEDICAL Vol. 4, Nos. 3&4

BULLETIN Sept-Dec.1978

THE MEDICAL BULLETIN is issued by and Yor Doctor Watson's Neglected Patients.





ANSWERS

ACROSS (8) Smartest (9) Hookah (10) Tr (11) Montalva (12) Needle (13) The Speckled Band (15) Rumours (18) Alarmed

- (21) Grimesby Roylott (24) Porter
- (25) Randalls (26) Odo (27) Region
- (28) Flowered

Research

Center.

DOWN (1) Smooth (2) Gratis (3) Leslie Armstrong (4) Attacks (5) Shinwell Johnson (6) November (7) Fail Once (14) Elm (16) Uprooted (17) Ormstein (19) Mio (20) Pycroft (22) Loaded (23) Toller

Sonnet

Trene Adler to Sherlock Holmes

At least I know the symptoms of a fire; and sometimes I can see through fog.

Your choice

was silence. Do I rightly state the case?

So much of life is lived out in disquise; and you are a far greater mystery now than I can solve. For I remember how your footsteps stopped at the sound of my voice.

my voice and the lock I thought I saw upon your face.

It may have been love. Wonders never cease ...
I wonder, is Reason your heart's desire?
Did you observe the colour of my eyes—
or only that they saw? It may have been fear;
or, very possibly, both. My dear, in whatever way you choose, I wish you peace.



UES ARE DUE! PLEASE SEND \$5 PER MEMBERSHIP TO:
THE WIELDER OF THE SCALPEL
DR. W.P. BLAKE
2410 EIGHTH AVENUE
GREELEY, COLORADO 80631

ADONO DA PARO LA SONO DE LA CONTROL DE LA CO

CREDITS: The Cartoon on Page Six is from The R. de Waal Collection. The Puzzle was perpetrated in its entirety by D. Pearson. The Portrait of the Editor Editor is the work of Surgeon Capt.
H.E.B. Curjel. The Victorian embellishments and calligraphy are done by The Saint and The Goosegirl Graphics.



