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From the Chief Surgeon

by James K. Butler

Well, quite a lot has happened since the last issue of the Bulletin. Several of the Patients (myself, Debbie, Jennie Decker, Ron Lies and John Stephenson) made the trip to Sante Fe last June to participate in the 16th Annual Col. Sebastian Moran Trap Shoot. We all had a very pleasant visit with John Bennett Shaw and awed at his marvelous library of Sherlockiana. At the trap shoot itself, we Coloradans made a spectacular showing with John Stephenson capturing first place and yours truly taking the second place trophy. We're all looking forward to next year and hope that even more Patients will participate.

Our annual Dr. Watson's birthday party and croquet tourney was held at the home of Stan and Jan Moskal on September 26th. As usual, a great time was had and several new members were welcomed at that time.

In the last issue it was reported that "In and Out of Character" by Basil Rathbone was back in print from Buccaneer Books. An attempt by myself to obtain this volume resulted in a returned check with no other explanation other than "your order cannot be filled". I suspect copyright problems, despite the fact that this book is listed in the current "Books in Print" listings and was advertised in a recent issue of "British Heritage" magazine - oh, well...

Our annual dinner is now in the final planning stages, and a notice will be sent to you all very soon. I sincerely hope that all of you can attend as we plan something quite different from years past and we are certain that you will enjoy this event in the centenary year of the Master's first appearance in print.

Welcome to all the new members who have joined DWNP since our last issue; their names and addresses are printed in the "Bulletin Board".

Finally, kudos to Jennie Decker who was recently investitured into the ASH - good job! Jennie is also a member of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, and has a paper being published in the December 1987 issue of the Baker Street Journal.

The Affair of the Stockbroker's Wife

by C. Tuckey Part Two

Nine o'clock the following morning found us in a secluded cul-de-sac in St. John's Wood, at the home of our unfortunate client and his missing wife. We did have some difficulty in reaching our destination, as the street in front of the Brace-Crowichs' was in a state of upheaval due to repairs, leaving paving stones and mud everywhere.

Our client greeted us, apologized for the inconvenience, and showed us to the sitting room.

"This is where I left Harriet," he motioned to the sofa, "and, when Violet entered the room a few hours later, this chair was overturned, the sofa had been moved to one side, and the poker was lying in the corner".

"Were there any blood stains on the poker?" asked Sherlock Holmes, examining the instrument. A startled look passed briefly over Brace-Crowich's face; he just as quickly recovered himself.

"I don't believe so; no, the staff would have made mention of it. Shall I fetch the staff?" Holmes nodded.

As we waited for the servants to appear, Sherlock Holmes strolled about the room. He examined the windowsill to ascertain whether the lock had been forced and assured us that that was not the fact. Holmes then passed to the fireplace to replace the poker. As he did so, I noticed that, for a second, his eyes flashed as a hound's might, upon coming on the faintest trace of the hare's scent. I was on the point of asking him to declare the object of his sudden and short-lived interest, but intuition held my tongue. Holmes regained his seat as the domestic staff, the butler, cook and two maids, filed in.

"Which of you is the ill-fated Violet, who discovered your mistress might be the

victim of vile intent?" They looked to one another. Brace-Crowich coughed.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Holmes, that I neglected to tell you Violet is no longer employed here. Poor girl, she was so unnerved by the events of that evening that I felt it only decent to let her go, rewarding her well for her trials and services, you understand."

"Where is she now?"

One of the maids spoke up. "I believe she has some family in Surrey; she mentioned them on occasion," with a glance her employer, she continued hastily, "but I don't know where in Surrey, and she's probably not there now." Brace-Crowich nodded. Holmes spent the next few minutes questioning the remaining staff, but found very little from them that was not already known. He dismissed them with a sigh.

"I'm afraid, my dear sir, that without speaking with Violet, a tenuous clue at that, I am rapidly running out of leads." Our client's face, full of hope since our arrival, fell. "If only we could find the missing maid. You wouldn't be able to shed any light on her present whereabouts? Ah, I thought not. My, it is exceeding close in here! Might I trouble you for a glass of water? Please, do not summon the staff; I've disrupted them enough today. Thank you."

The door had hardly closed behind our host when Holmes sprang from his seat and fell to his hands and knees by the fireplace. With his lense,

he examined the wooden flooring. "Watson!" hissed he, "Look at this!" I joined him on the floor and, using the lense, noticed a faint patch of stain about six inches in diameter. I looked up at him.

"Blood?" His eyes twinkled and burned like miniature infernos.

"And recent, too. Someone took excessive pains to mop this up. But not before it could soak into the boards. And look here," he snatched the poker from its stand and held it under the lenses, pointing, "there is a small dried stain here." My companion sat back on his haunches. "I am beginning to have doubts our Mrs. Brace-Crowich ever left this room alive."

We were safely in our seats by the time Brace-Crowich returned. Holmes drank the water fetched for him and then made ready to go, admonishing him that, should he receive anything regarding the fate of his wife, he waste no time in bringing it to us. The butler, Nichols, assisted us through the construction area and so safely to the end of the street, where he hailed a cab for us. I was glad for his assistance, for once I nearly pitched headlong into a ditch, were it not for Nichols, who quickly steadied me.

Once inside the cab on our way back to Baker Street, Holmes lit his pipe and grew thoughtful, tapping his long fingers on his knees. Finally, he spoke.

"All is not well in that household, Watson. A woman, well liked and respected, suddenly disappears, a possible victim of foul play. The husband, fearing a scandal, waits three days after learning of her absence, before he seeks help. He dares not go to the police, the rational choice. The one witness who might shed some light, however opaque, on the mystery, is fired and no one, not even her co-workers, knows where she has gotten to. And now, we find a blood-stained poker and a corresponding stain on the floor where she was last seen. What does that suggest to you, my dear fellow?"

"That something horrible has befallen Harriet Brace-Crowich, and some person or persons unknown have expended great efforts to hide it or to put us on the wrong trail. But, Holmes, if Arthur Brace-Crowich has murdered his wife, why come to you to find her? Surely your reputation at solving problems which others give up as hopeless brought him to us."

Sherlock Holmes nodded. "There are easier ways, and Brace-Crowich is not so ignorant as to be not aware of them, to despatch one's wife and explain away her absence. He wouldn't kill her and then ask me to explain her death. No, Watson, a person's actions speak more than they could ever utter; he sincerely wants me to find her." He leaned his forehead against the cab window. "It all seemed so simple at the outset, yet something isn't right. All my instincts rise up against the facts."

"Perhaps if we could find this Violet some questions could be answered."

"The question is," answered my companion, "how to find Violet. There is a wonderful comraderie between servants, of which their masters know nothing. Confidences are exchanged between maids over their scrub buckets, all in complete secrecy from the occupants above stairs. I know that that girl who worked with Violet knows where she is. I need to speak with her away from the confines of that household. I must get more information from her, or from the other staff."

"Should we turn round and go back?" I asked, feeling in my pocket for my cigarette case. Instead, my fingers closed about a scrap of paper. Without thinking, I drew it forth and read the contents.

"Holmes, I don't think we need trouble the staff." I handed the note, hastily scribbled on the reverse of a butcher's receipt, to Holmes:

"Violet Haines-Parish of St. Bartholomew, Esher, Surrey"

"By Jove, Watson! Where did this appear from?"

"Perhaps Nichols slipped it in my pocket when I tripped."

"I don't care if it came from the Queen herself," hooted Holmes, "We've got her; we're back on the trail. Driver," pounding on the roof, "Paddington Station!"

The train to Esher was not to leave until one-fifteen, so Holmes and I were able to eat a light lunch. We boarded

the train and arrived in the quiet village of Esher sometime after three o'clock. A short walk brought us to the rectory of St. Bartholomew. The priest, a white-haired, slight gentleman, answered our query after Violet Haines. Her family owned a small farm approximately five miles from Esher. In no time at all, we had engaged a trap and were on our way. The priest believed that Violet had returned from London, though he had not spoken with her.

The late afternoon sun beat down on the road in front of us and illuminated the clouds of dust kicked up by the passage of our wheels. I was grateful to escape the heat and smell of London for the relative coolness of the country, even though the thermometer at the railway station had registered 85 degrees.

We found the object of our journey, Violet Haines, at her parents' home. Violet was a small, slight girl, with brown hair and fair complexion, quietly dressed. She quickly made us at home, but grew ill-at-ease when Holmes explained the purpose of our visit.

"I'm afraid, sirs, that I can tell you very little outside of what you probably know," she answered. "I was the only one on duty that evening. I heard a thump from upstairs sometime after eight o'clock. I thought very little of it until after ten, when I went to the sitting room to enquire whether Mrs. Brace-Crowich desired anything before she went to bed. She usually retired about half past ten.

I walked into the sitting room and discovered the furniture all knocked around and Mrs. Brace-Crowich missing."

"What of the blood stain near the fireplace?"

Violet looked at us strangely. "What blood stain? I didn't see any such stain. As God as my witness, I don't know anything about any blood stain."

Holmes leaned forward and, taking her hands in his, studied her eyes.

"Whom are you shielding, Violet? You know far more than you are telling us. If something has happened to Mrs. Brace-Crowich, I shall see that justice is swift and sure."

Violet sat for a long moment, obviously struggling under some heavy burden on her mind. Finally, something gave way. She broke into tears.

"I'm so sorry. If I had only called the doctor, things wouldn't be the state they're in now. How I curse myself that evening." She looked up at us. "I guess that the only thing that can be done now is for me to tell the truth."

"You see, I was the newest employee for the Brace-Crowich; I had only been in service there for eight months. That's why I was left at home that evening while the rest of the staff took the night off. I'm rarely permitted above stairs, save on payday, so perhaps I couldn't do as much as I might."

"You gentlemen know Mr. Brace-Crowich as a respected, well-thought of member of society; that could not be further from the truth in his home life. He has the temper of a Hun, and most of the time he vents his anger on Mrs. Brace-Crowich. Oh, sirs, he's a real thrasher if his wife has crossed his purposes. Perhaps a man has good reason to chastise his wife if she's done him wrong, but not like Mr. Brace-Crowich does his lady, beating on her til the blood comes and she can hardly stand."

"Surely, she defends herself." Holmes replied.

"Not at all, she just keeps her mouth shut."

My companion glanced across at me. "Pray continue".

"Well, as I said before, I knew my place in the house, but I could scarcely carry out my duties knowing that such injustices existed under the same roof as I. I couldn't dare speak to the master about it; I tried to talk to the rest of the staff, but they would just as soon cut out their tongues as speak against him. So I took to spending my free time, whenever possible, with the mistress and generally helping her up after Mr. Brace-Crowich's rages."

"That evening, I knew that the master was to go out of town for a few days and I had screwed up my courage to speak with the mistress about her taking it all in silence, knowing full well that it was not my place to do so. I also knew that Mr. Brace-

Crowich was in a black mood and I prayed that he would leave before there was another incident."

"About eight o'clock, I brought some tea to the sitting room where she was reading. It was quiet for a short while and then I heard what I wished I'd never hear again. It was a terrible battle, which ended up with a crash and a thump, as I said before. Then everything grew quiet again. I was so frightened by the quarrel, for that's what it was, that I waited almost an hour to creep upstairs. My stomach turned to water when I found the sitting room all akilter and Mrs. Brace-Crowich lying in a pool of blood and the bloody poker at her feet."

"After I collected myself a bit, I got a towel and wiped up the blood and got the mistress to the sofa, where I cleaned her head and face as best I could and wrapped it in another towel. All this time she didn't stir once, just lay there still as death."

"Mr. Holmes, I'm afraid that I just panicked after I got her to the sofa. I didn't know that to do. So, instead of doing what I should have done and fetched medical attention, I ran round the corner to a friend of mine, a gentleman who calls for me on occasion, and brought him back, telling him that burglars had broken in and had beaten her."

"How long were you absent?"

"Half an hour at the most. Nonetheless, when I got back, I found her missing and the

front door open. We searched the entire house, and, other than the sitting room in shambles, nothing was gone. I'm afraid that at that point, gentlemen, I quite came apart and I don't recall much of the rest of that evening. I don't know whether the police had been summoned, or whether the master had been notified". She smiled. "What a irony; the man who vows to love and cherish his wife, who beats her within an inch of her life, now hires a private detective to discover where she has gone. If you may excuse me saying so, Mr. Holmes, but if you still chose to work for Mr. Brace-Crowich, I hope you don't find her."

Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his chair, laced his fingers across his chest and rested his chin upon them. I felt stunned at this revelation to our problem. Assuredly, I was aware that there were in London women who lived under the tyrannical yoke of their brutish husbands; indeed, my friendship with Sherlock Holmes had brought me in contact with a few of these ladies. But I confessed, with a pang, that experiences had revealed the spouses of these women to be uncivilized, drink sotten animals, with only a thin veneer of civility. Here we were met with an honourable, reasoning gentleman, highly intelligent, a representative of the highest pinnacle of society. I began to wonder how much of Brace-Crowich's polished suavity was merely veneer.

"And, you, the only one who might disclose his indiscretions, were removed and your silence bought."

"He gave me a quarter's pay and a sterling letter of reference."

"He is sure to discover that we've talked to you," I spoke up. "Would you prefer that we remove you to a place of safety for a few days?" The girl shook her head.

"I'm not concerned he'll come after me. Besides, I've got my father and two brothers to look after me. I just wish Mrs. Brace-Crowich had someone to protect her."

Standing, Holmes moved to the window and studied the yard outside. I, for one, grew more confused as the moments passed. Who was this assumingly respectable, genteel man who treated his wife no better than a miscreant dog. What were the events surrounding that terrible evening, what happened to Harriet Brace-Crowich and where, oh where, was the unfortunate lady now?

"I want you to think ever so carefully now; tell me everything you remember," my friend spoke. "Did Harriet ever speak of any friends or relatives who may have known of the relations between her and her husband?"

"Don't think I haven't lain wake til dawn, asking myself the same question, sirs. She never spoke of any relations, and none ever came to visit. As for friends, she belonged to a ladies' literary group; I think the ladies met once a month, but the mistress would attend only when she felt able, which wasn't but every two or three months. Outside of an occasional caller every few weeks, most often some lady friends of hers, she kept to herself."

"Any gentleman caller?" I enquired. I know that Holmes had pursued this line with Mr. Brace-Crowich, but a man who was obviously blind to his wife's suffering could be blind to her private matters.

"She did have a gentleman caller one or two times." Violet caught our eye. "Even though Lord knows she didn't deserve the treatment she got from the master, she wasn't one to take her vows lightly. He was just an acquaintance of hers".

"Who was he?"

"I wish, Mr. Holmes, that I knew more to tell you. The only two times I saw him was when he called. He never gave his name, though I learned by accident that his name is Chester. He is a short man, black hair and beard, very strongly built. He would time his visits so as never to call when the master was about, usually in the evenings, and he would never stay more than half an hour. He also waited until most of the servants were out before he came to the house."

"Did he know of Mrs. Brace-Crowich's injuries?"

She nodded. "One of the two times I was summoned to the sitting room, where she entertained him, to bring tea, he was pleading with her to leave him. Of course, as I entered the room he stopped, but I know that he wished her to be rid of her husband."

"Think very carefully," asked the detective. "Is there anything else, however

trivial, that you remember about this man? Any distinguishing features, an address he may have left, any business affiliates, anything which might lead us to this man?"

The room settled into a pregnant quiet. As Holmes and I waited, she fidgeted with the kerchief in her lap. After a while, obviously at a loss, she threw up her hands.

"I'm sorry, sirs, the saints above know I wish I could help, but I'm afraid that I've told you everything I know." We collected our hats and rose to go. "I promise you gentlemen that if I can remember anything else I shall not hesitate to contact you." Violet touched my sleeve as I stepped out of the door. "Please, Dr. Watson, if, in some way, I can help. please let me know."

The greater part of our return trip to London was passed in silence. I tried to bring Holmes out, but he made it all too obvious to me that he wished no parts of any conversation. He was far too engrossed with the sudden and shocking turn of events and it now seemed, the insurmountable barrier which had been placed just as suddenly before us. After questioning my companion on the case, and receiving no answer in return, I settled into confining my thoughts to myself. In our years of working together, we had never come upon a case as dastardly as this; that a man who defined the very word respectability, a man such as Arthur Brace-Crowich, could

hide such a cold-hearted, monstrous side to his nature, and mask it so masterfully. What twisted sense of devotion leads a man to lash out at one he presumably cherishes. And how strong were the ties of matrimony that could bind a woman to endure such callosity?

It was after dark when we arrived back in Baker Street. Our housekeeper had laid out a cold supper; with the heat and the execrable turn of events of the day, I felt very little like eating. Sherlock Holmes sat contemplating an empty plate, refilling and recharging his clay pipe. Shortly after supper, the day's activities caught up with me, so I excused myself and crawled between the sheets of my bed.

Yet, for my complete exhaustion, I could not fall asleep. I kept turning the facts of the problem before us over in my mind. I listened to the stories of each of the players of our little drama, weighing the refinement of Joseph Brace-Crowich against the uncultivated Violet, the polish of our client against the sincerity of the maid. After tossing and turning in a fruitless attempt to find a cool spot in my bed, I drifted into slumber, lulled by the drone of Holmes' violin drifting up from below. My last thoughts before I slipped into oblivion were that we needed to find Harriet Brace-Crowich in the most desperate way, not for the sake of her husband, for for the sake of Harriet.

Piercing the Veil at Last

by Jennifer Decker, ASH

"Holmes," I cried, "this is impossible."

"Admirable!" he said. "A most illuminating remark. It is impossible as I state it, and therefore I must in some respect have stated it wrong..." (the Priory School)

If we examine the problem of dating The Valley of Fear, we must come to the annoying conclusion that Holmes's above-quoted didacticism applies only too well to the problem at hand. To restate but a few of the difficulties

we face: Watson tells us, "it was the early days at the end of the eighties," but then how, at this time, can he be so informed upon the subject of Moriarty and later, in the spring of 1891 during "The Final Problem", be wholly ignorant of the Professor's very existence? If we opt for a later date, in the nineties, how can the good doctor be dwelling in Baker Street at this time when we know he wed Mary Morstan no later than 1889? How, too, can Moriarty still be walking the earth at this time? And if we accept an earlier, pre-Watsonian marriage date, how

can we "journey back some twenty years in time," to arrive in Vermissa Valley on the fourth of February, 1875"? The reply to all these questions must be the same: it is impossible.

In attempting to resolve the inconsistencies numerous commentators have applied subtle and overly complex chains of reasoning to the problem. G.B. Newton, who opted for 1890 as the year of the adventure, based a large part of his argument on secondary issues such as the presumed dates of unrecorded Holmes cases such as those of Trincomalee and of the reigning family of Holland¹; it seems superfluous to point out that these dates also rest on equally ephemeral ground. Gavin Brend, in fixing on the year 1900, was driven to postulate a second Moriarty². Anthony Boucher's vote for the year 1897 relies upon adding together the years from the time of the Scowrers' trial in 1875, plus ten years for their prison terms, plus the "not less than eleven years" that have elapsed since Douglas first met Cecil Barker; Boucher is, of course, forced to suggest that Watson's illegible penmanship was misinterpreted by the typesetter as "the eighties", rather³ than the actual "nineties"³. William Baring-Gould and Ernest Zeisler, who both arrive at the year 1888 by similar arguments⁴⁵ that involve tallying up the years, reinterpreting the time of the Douglas/Barker meeting, and relying upon weather and moon phase charts to bolster their data, must still assume as must Newton that Dr.

Watson took the most extreme literary license in The Final Problem by telling us that he was at the time of the case ignorant of any knowledge of Moriarty. In short, they would have us believe that Watson simply lied.

I suppose that others have been left as intellectually unsatisfied as myself by the plethora of specious dating arguments, for it is always seemed to me that the main point had been missed. Surely, the most obvious means of dating Valley is imbedded in this speech from Holmes:

"Excellent, Watson! I am very much mistaken if you have not touched the spot. An Almanack! Let us consider the claims of Whitaker's Almanack..."

Although he fails with the current year's volume, by next going to that of the previous year, Holmes finds, to his satisfaction, that it is indeed the correct source for the solution to Porlock's coded letter.

But Whitaker's Almanack is a real publication, as are nearly all of the books mentioned in the Canon. If Holmes kept it near at hand, so too must Mr. Gladstone have done, and even the Queen herself. In short, it was "a very common book". If we, then, go to Whitaker's Almanack for all the years from 1885 to 1905 (so as to leave no stone unturned) and consult page 534 in every

volume, the one whose indicated page matches the cipher will indicate the year immediate before the adventure.

Even though I had long held this simple belief, only the past spring did I finally discover a library which actually owned the volumes I sought: a glorious set of Whitaker's complete from the years 1879 to 1912. I felt the solution to the matter was imminent.

Only then did I discover the disturbing truth: no volume of Whitaker's exists that matches the code. This forced me to think of the matter in a wholly different light, not from Watson's point of view but from Conan Doyle's.

Why did he not, as author, bolster Holmes's impressive bit of deduction by a real reference that we as readers could go to, to satisfy ourselves that Holmes had got it right? "There--is--danger--may--come--very--soon--one--"; surely none of these words is out of the ordinary. One might very easily go to any page in Whitaker's and derive from it a cipher that would convey whatever one wished--yet Doyle did not do this. Laziness? Hardly; the energetic doctor, whaler, spiritualist and man of letters was not prey to this vice. And why the overwhelming contradictions that make consistent dating impossible? Why the vagueness of Watson's "end of the eighties"? Can we assume

Conan Doyle, whose penetrating intellect was the very fountainhead of the entire Holmes saga, was too simple to see the inconsistencies? "Come now, Watson, this really won't do".

I therefore started a brand-new chain of argument: Conan Doyle, who wrote with consummate artistry, could not possibly have overlooked the conflicting dates in Valley. Therefore, since he had left them in the text, he had put them there deliberately. By the same reasoning, he had also chosen with deliberate intention not to have the coded letter match any actual volume of Whitaker's. If we can discover the single reason behind these facts, then we will be significantly closer to solving the internal puzzle in The Valley of Fear.

I decided to sleep on it. It was still dark when I, quite suddenly, awoke with a new idea: there is a hidden message behind the code in Porlock's letter.

As the Master himself on one occasion remarked, "It was easier to know it than to explain why I know it." But upon this reflection I knew that the intermediate steps must have run something like this:

1. As stated, the cipher in the letter does not match page 534 in any volume of Whitaker's. Why not, when it would have been a simple matter?

2. Because some other exigency involved in writing the novel made it not only difficult but impossible for Conan Doyle to do so.

3. If he, as author, had hidden another message with a different source within the code, this would explain it. It would force him to select the numbered words from the hidden source. Once chosen, he could not then arbitrarily select words from a page of the almanack, for the other source would have pre-determined what word selection. And a fore-ordained set of numbers when applied to a page at random had virtually no chance of producing any meaningful message; in practical terms it is impossible.

We must conclude, then, that there is a hidden message. It is why Conan Doyle chose to be so vague about "the end of the eighties": he means us to realize that the surface cipher has no match that exists in reality. This is also the reason that he makes the dating inconsistencies so obvious, for they are signposts telling us that we cannot take the surface indications of the novel literally, and that there is more here than meets the eye.

To state the matter plainly, Conan Doyle buried a cryptogram within the early pages of Valley that has never been solved. But he intended us to solve it, and to guide us in doing so, he provides us with the most impeccable of teachers, Sherlock Holmes himself. We know his methods, and if we

will follow his own steps exactly we will find what we seek. Let us be guided, also, by the imagery Doyle has selected.

1. "'It is Porlock's writing,' said [Holmes] thoughtfully." This immediately suggests the connection with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who states in his preface to "Kubla Khan" that his writing of that poem was interrupted "by a person on business from Porlock". Many commentators have noted this connection; none has followed it to its logical conclusion.

2. "'Porlock, Watson, is a nom-de-plume...'" That is, a pen-name. This suggests a writer, as does Holmes's later "'This man's reference is to a book'". This reinforces the idea of our source being Coleridge.

3. "'...Porlock is important, not for himself, but for the great man with whom he is in touch.'" The man from Porlock was in touch with Coleridge; we can turn now to Coleridge's writings without hesitation. But which writings?

4. "'We may take it as working hypotheses that 534 is the particular page to which the cipher refers. So our book has already become a large book, which is surely something to be gained.'" Coleridge, however, was in the main a poet, and so we are looking for a poem. In checking Coleridge's complete works⁶, we note that all of the poems have meticulously numbered lines. We may take

as our working hypotheses, therefore, that 534 is the particular line to which the cipher refers, and our poem has now become a long one.

5. "'The next sign is C2. What do you make of that, Watson'

'Chapter the second, no doubt.'

'Hardly that, Watson...''

In fact, "C2" is yet a fourth indication that Coleridge is our source. C2 should be read "Coleridge 2": that is to say, our poem is one of a series of poems, in which it is commonly considered to fall in second position.

6. "'Had the volume been an unusual one he would have sent it to me. Instead of that he had intended ...to send me the clue...In short, it is a very common book'". To wit: it is a very common poem. We will have no difficulty laying our hands on it.

7. "'Let us consider the claims of Whitaker's Almanack. It is in common use. It has the requisite number of pages...'". Let us consider the claims of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Every schoolchild is familiar with it. It has the requisite number of lines. It is one of a series of three long poems which includes "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" that are commonly considered by scholars to form a trilogy because of their common fantastical imagery, with

"Christabel" first, "Ancient Mariner" in second position and "Kubla Khan" last.

7. "'Picture to yourself the pilot-fish with the shark...'". The nautical imagery supports our choice of "Ancient Mariner".

8. Turning to this poem, we begin to number the words but are immediately confronted by an unexpected difficulty. (from the Ancient Mariner):

(Line 534)

"My forest-brook along:

When the ivy-tod is heavy
with snow,

And the owlet whoops to the
wolf below,

That eats the she-wolf's
young."

The difficulty that we face, only too plainly, is how to number the hyphenated words. Are they each one word or two? The answer is all important, for one slip will throw our calculations hopelessly off. Luckily, Holmes himself tells us the answer: "...the next word is 'pigs-'bristles'...". He confidently counts this hyphenated phrase as a single word, and so we will do likewise. At this juncture I proceeded to "jot down the words" and found myself staring at:

13 127 36 31 4 17
 owlet found am the when wolf
 21 41 109 293 5
 the on Douglas like then the
 37 26
 a-feared Birlstone it
 9 127 171
 Birlstone with found the.

As I stared at this gobbledy-
 gook my heart sank. As
 Holmes so eloquently puts it,
 "We are undone, my good
 Watson! It is finished."

10. But maybe not; Holmes
 himself found naught but
 gobbledy-gook on his first
 try. Is not our first
 solution the precise
 equivalent of "Maharatta
 Government pigs'-bristles"?
 Let us observe what the
 Master does next: "A long
 silence was broken by a
 sudden exclamation from
 Holmes, who dashed at a
 cupboard, from which he
 emerged with a second yellow-
 covered volume in his hands.

"We pay the price, Watson,
 for being too up-to-date," he
 cried. "...we have very
 properly laid in the new
 almanack. It is more than
 likely that Porlock took his
 message from the old one."

The old one! Was there,
 then, an earlier version of
 "The Rime of the Ancient
 Mariner"? By checking the
 complete works once more I
 confirmed that this was
 indeed so. "The Ancient
 Mariner", in its present
 form, was first published in
Sybilline Leaves in 1817, but
 the first version, "The Rime
 of the Ancyent Marinere", was
 printed in Lyrical Ballads in
 1798 and is still readily

available. And, by once
 again numbering and jotting
 down the words, I finally
 arrived at:

13 127 36 31 4 17
 On that joy, in ghastly blew
 21 41 109
 the "not Douglas". Country,
 293 5 37
 bay, crew -- The Birlstone.
 26 9 127
 Them Birlstone shade that
 171
 hour! (our)

We can, of course, substitute
 the more meaningful "hour"
 for "our", for as clearly
 indicated by Conan Doyle:

12. "'What a queer,
 scrambling way of expressing
 his meaning!' said [Watson].
 'On the contrary, he had done
 quite remarkable well,' said
 Holmes. 'When you search a
 single column for words with
 which to express your
 meaning, you can hardly
 expect to get everything you
 want. You are bound to leave
 something to the intelligence
 of your correspondent.... He
 is sure--"confidence" was as
 near as he could get to
"confident"--that is
 pressing.'"

What must we think now of the
 fruits of pure reason? I was
 exultant; I had the solution
 in my hand. What a pity
 modern supermarkets do not
 carry laurel wreaths! Not
 only had Conan Doyle
 concealed in his cipher a
 short, succinct poem that
 reveals the ultimate solution
 of the Birlstone murder (the
 "not Douglas" is the

punishing hand of the Scowrers, Ted Baldwin, who "in ghastly blew" on the peace and joy of the people at Birlstone and ended up as the misidentified corpse), but "country, bay, crew--The Birlstone" indicates that Birlstone Manor should be thought of, metaphorically, as a ship. "Country" (its site in the countryside), "bay" (the moat surrounding the manor), "crew" (the Douglases and Cecil Barker)--these are the components of the good ship Birlstone. This is the primary reason Conan Doyle selected a house surrounded by a moat, to suggest an allusion to the wandering ship in "The Ancyent Marinere". It is sailing, as did the mariner's ship, in unknown waters fraught with peril. And, as did the ancient mariner, Douglas as Birdy Edwards (another Doylean clue) has slain the albartoss by bringing about the downfall of the Scowrers. The dead bird hung about the mariner's neck; he could not shake it free no matter where his ship might sail, driven by the vengeful

"...spirit who 'bidith by himself

In the land of mist and snow,

He loved the bird that lov'd the man

Who shot him with his bow."

("The Ancyent Marinere", line 407-410)

The Scowrers did indeed love and admire Birdy Edwards whom they fully expected to eventually assume their leadership. His betrayal of them was the deciding act that earned him the fatal attentions of Moriarty, whose invisible death-dealing arm could not ultimately be eluded, no matter in what far corner of the earth Douglas and his wife chose to hide. As we later also discover, he will meet his death by the unseen agency of this virtually supernatural arm, mysteriously vanishing overboard from the ship in which he and his wife had fled.

At the time of finding the hidden message, I was not yet aware of the existence of Kelvin Jones' magnificent article dealing with the Coleridgean influences in the Holmes stories, which he further elaborated upon in a later book. When I did get the opportunity to read his work, I found it an extremely sensitive treatment of the Romantic influences making Sherlock Holmes the man and symbol he has become to us. These influences resonate strongly with the whole of The Valley of Fear and with everything that I myself have unveiled.

"A person on business from Porlock," wrote Anthony Boucher in his Introduction to The Final Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, "interrupted forever the highest flight of the genius of Samuel Taylor Coleridge;...I feel that some deeper meaning is latent here, but cannot define it..." Were he still alive, I cannot think but that Mr.

Boucher would be very pleased to see his search for the hidden meaning here finally met with success. And, having at last brought to light the true solution to the cipher, we find ourselves now able to comprehend the essential reasons that Valley cannot be dated. The inconsistencies of the dates is Conan Doyle's intentional device signalling to us that the surface solution to the cipher should be interpreted

not literally, but rather analogously to our own independent line of reasoning. For those who insist upon an actual date, this will leave them as unsatisfied as ever. But for the rest of us who delight in successfully using the Master's own methods, this must surely prove to be the definitive solution. I suspect Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself would have reason to be proud.



"WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, HOLMES?"

1. G.B. Newton, "The Date of the Valley of Fear", SHJ, 2, No. 4 (Winter 1955), pp. 38-42.
2. Gavin Brend, My Dear Holmes: A Study in Sherlock, (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1951), pp.
3. Anthony Boucher, "Introduction", The Final Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, (New York: The Limited Editions Club, 1952) vol. 1, pp. v-xvii.
4. William Baring-Gould (ed.), The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, (New York: Clarkson H. Potter, 1967), Vol. 1, p. 475n and p. 486n.
5. E.B. Zeisler, "Concerning the Valley of Fear", BSJ, (NS) 4, No. 3 (July 1954), pp. 144-147.
6. E.H. Coleridge (ed.), The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (Oxford: University Press, 1912), Vol. 1 and Vol. 2.
7. Kelvin Jones, "That Deep Romantic Chasm," SHJ, 9, No. 2 (Summer 1969), pp. 57-59.
8. _____, Sherlock and Porlock, (New York: Magico Magazine, 1984) pp. 9-24.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast: 505
 Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.
 I saw a third—I heard his voice:
 It is the Hermit good!
 He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
 That he makes in the wood.
 He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

The Hermit of
 the Wood,

This Hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea. 515
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
 He loves to talk with marineres
 That come from a far countree.
 He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
 He hath a cushion plump: 520
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
 'Why, this is strange, I trow!
 Where are those lights so many and fair, 525
 That signal made but now?'

Approacheth
 the ship with
 wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
 'And they answered not our cheer!
 The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
 How thin they are and sere! 530
 I never saw aught like to them,
 Unless perchance it were

line 534 → Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
 My forest-brook along;

511 makes] maketh (a pencilled correction in 1828, ? by S. T. C.).
 PART VII] VII. L. B. 1798, 1800: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Part
 the Seventh S. L. 1829: The Ancient Mariner. Part the Seventh 1828.
 517 marineres] mariners L. B. 1800. 518 That come from a far
 Countree. L. B. 1798. 523 neared] ner'd L. B. 1798, 1800. 529
 looked] look L. B. 1798, 1800, S. L. 533 Brown] The L. B. 1798, 1800,
 S. L. [for The read Broun. Errata, S. L. 1817, p. (xi)].

When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535
 And the owl whoops to the wolf below,
 That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
 (The Pilot made reply)
 I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!' 540
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
 But I nor spake nor stirred; 545
 The boat came close beneath the ship,
 And straight a sound was heard.

The ship
 suddenly
 sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
 Still louder and more dread: 550
 It reached the ship, it split the bay;
 The ship went down like lead.

The ancient
 Mariner is
 saved in the
 Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 555
 Which sky and ocean smote,
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned
 My body lay afloat;
 But swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
 The boat spun round and round; 560
 And all was still, save that the hill
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
 And fell down in a fit;
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
 And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
 Who now doth crazy go, 565
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while
 His eyes went to and fro.

'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
 The Devil knows how to row.
 And now, all in my own countree,
 I stood on the firm land!

The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
 And scarcely he could stand.

543 nor . . . nor] ne . . . ne L. B. 1798.

17

The ancient
Mariner
earnestly en-
treateth the
Hermit to
shrieve him;
and the
penance of
life falls on
him.

248 249 250 251 252 253 254
'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
255 256 257 258 259
The Hermit crossed his brow
260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
268 269 270 271 272 273
What manner of man art thou?'
274 275 276 277 278 279 280
Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
281 282 283 284
With a woful agony,
285 286 287 288 289 290 291
Which forced me to begin my tale;
292 293 294 295 296 297
And then it left me free.
298 299 300 301 302 303
Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—
To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends.
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

577 What manner man *L. B. 1798, 1800.*
582-5 Since then at an uncertain hour,
Now oft-times and now fewer,
That anguish comes and makes me tell
My ghastly aventure. *L. B. 1798.*
583 agony] agency [a misprint] *L. B. 1800.* 588 That; The *L. B.*
1798, 1800.

And to teach,
by his own
example, love
and reverence
to all things
that God made
and loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

1797-1798. 61c
615
620
625

SONNETS ATTEMPTED IN THE MANNER OF
CONTEMPORARY WRITERS¹

[SIGNED 'NEHEMIAH HIGGINBOTTOM']

I

PENSIVE at eve on the *hard* world I mus'd,
And my *poor* heart was sad: so at the Moon

¹ First published in the *Monthly Magazine* for November, 1797. They were reprinted in the *Poetical Register* for 1803 (1805); by Coleridge in the *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, i. 26-8*; and by Cottle in *Early Recollections*, i. 290-2; and in *Reminiscences*, p. 160. They were first collected in *P. and D. W.*, 1877-80, i. 211-13.

* 'Under the name of Nehemiah Higginbottom I contributed three sonnets, the first of which had for its object to excite a good-natured laugh at the spirit of doleful egotism and at the recurrence of favourite phrases, with the double defect of being at once trite and licentious. The second was on low creeping language and thoughts under the pretence of simplicity. The third, the phrases of which were borrowed entirely from my own poems, on the indiscriminate use of elaborate and swelling language and imagery. . . . So general at the time and so decided was the opinion

610 Farewell, farewell] *The comma to be omitted. Errata, L. B. 1798.* 618
The Mariner *L. B. 1798.*

Sonnets, &c.—Title] Sonnet I *M. M.*

I pray'd and turn'd my head away
 Forth looking as before. 500
 There was no breeze upon the bay,
 No wave against the shore.
 The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
 That stands above the rock: 503
 The moonlight steep'd in silentness
 The steady weathercock.
 And the bay was white with silent light,
 Till rising from the same
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colours came. 510
 A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were:
 I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—
 O Christ! what saw I there?
 Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat;
 And by the Holy rood 515
 A man all light, a seraph-man.
 On every corse there stood.
 This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand:
 It was a heavenly sight: 520
 They stood as signals to the land.
 Each one a lovely light:
 This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand,
 No voice did they impart—
 No voice; but O! the silence sank. 525
 Like music on my heart.
 Eftsones I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the pilot's cheer:
 My head was turn'd perforce away
 And I saw a boat appear. 530
 Then vanish'd all the lovely lights;
 The bodies rose anew:
 With silent pace, each to his place,
 Came back the ghastly crew. 535
 The wind, that shude nor motion made,
 On me alone it blew.

19

Line 534 →

^{18 19 20 21 22 23}
 The pilot, and the pilot's boy
^{24 25 26 27 28}
 I heard them coming fast:
^{29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36}
 Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy,
^{37 38 39 40 41 42}
 The dead men could not blast. 540
^{43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50}
 I saw a third—I heard his voice:
^{51 52 53 54 55}
 It is the Hermit good!
^{56 57 58 59 60 61}
 He singeth loud his godly hymns
^{62 63 64 65 66 67}
 That he makes in the wood,
^{68 69 70 71 72 73 74}
 He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
^{75 76 77}
 The Albatross's blood. 545
 VII.
^{78 79 80 81 82 83 84}
 This Hermit good lives in that wood
^{85 86 87 88 89 90}
 Which slopes down to the Sea.
^{91 92 93 94 95 96 97}
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
^{98 99 100 101 102 103}
 He loves to talk with Marineres
^{104 105 106 107 108 109}
 That come from a far Contrée. 550
^{110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117}
 He kneels at morn and noon and eve—
^{118 119 120 121 122}
 He hath a cushion plump:
^{123 124 125 126 127 128 129}
 It is the moss that wholly hides
^{130 131 132 133}
 The rotted old Oak-stump. 555
^{134 135 136 137 138 139 140}
 The Skiff-boat neard: I heard them talk,
^{141 142 143 144 145 146}
 "Why, this is strange, I trow!"
^{147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154}
 "Where are those lights so many and fair
^{155 156 157 158 159}
 "That signal made but now?"
^{160 161 162 163 164 165 166}
 "Strange, by my faith! the Hermit said—
^{167 168 169 170 171 172}
 "And they answer'd not our cheer"
^{173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180}
 "The planks look wavy'd, and see those sails
^{181 182 183 184 185 186}
 How thin they are and sere!
^{187 188 189 190 191 192 193}
 "I never saw aught like to them
^{194 195 196 197}
 "Unless perchance it were 560
^{198 199 200 201 202 203}
 "The skeletons of leaves that lag
^{204 205 206}
 "My forest-brook along:
^{207 208 209 210 211 212 213}
 "When the Ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
^{214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221}
 "And the Owllet whoops to the wolf below
^{222 223 224 225 226}
 "That eats the she-wolf's young. 570
^{227 228 229 230 231 232 233}
 "Dear Lord! it has a fiendish look—
^{234 235 236 237}
 "The Pilot made reply)
^{238 239 240 241 242 243 244}
 "I am afeard—.. push on, push on!
^{245 246 247}
 "Said the Hermit cheerily.

²⁴⁹ ²⁵⁰ ²⁵¹ ²⁵² ²⁵³ ²⁵⁴ ²⁵⁵
 The Boat came closer to the Ship, 575
²⁵⁶ ²⁵⁷ ²⁵⁸ ²⁵⁹ ²⁶⁰ ²⁶¹
 But I ne spake ne stirr'd!
²⁶² ²⁶³ ²⁶⁴ ²⁶⁵ ²⁶⁶ ²⁶⁷ ²⁶⁸
 The Boat came close beneath the Ship,
²⁶⁹ ²⁷⁰ ²⁷¹ ²⁷² ²⁷³ ²⁷⁴
 And strait a sound was heard!
²⁷⁵ ²⁷⁶ ²⁷⁷ ²⁷⁸ ²⁷⁹ ²⁸⁰
 Under the water it rumbled on,
²⁸¹ ²⁸² ²⁸³ ²⁸⁴ ²⁸⁵
 Still louder and more dread: 580
²⁸⁶ ²⁸⁷ ²⁸⁸ ²⁸⁹ ²⁹⁰ ²⁹¹ ²⁹² ²⁹³
 It reach'd the Ship, it split the bay;
²⁹⁴ ²⁹⁵ ²⁹⁶ ²⁹⁷ ²⁹⁸ ²⁹⁹
 The Ship went down like lead!

Stunn'd by that loud and dreadful sound,
 Which sky and ocean smote:
 Like one that had been seven days drown'd 585
 My body lay afloat:
 But, swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the Ship,
 The boat spun round and round: 590
 And all was still, save that the hill
 Was telling of the sound.

I mov'd my lips: the Pilot shriek'd
 And fell down in a fit.
 The Holy Hermit rais'd his eyes 595
 And pray'd where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
 Who now doth crazy go,
 Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while 600
 His eyes went to and fro,
 "Ha! ha!" quoth he—"full plain I see,
 "The devil knows how to row."

And now all in mine own Countrée
 I stood on the firm land!
 The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat. 605
 And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man!
 The Hermit cross'd his brow—
 "Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say
 "What manner man art thou?" 610

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
 With a woeful agony,
 Which forc'd me to begin my tale
 And then it left me free.

Since then at an uncertain hour. 615
 Now oftimes and now fewer,
 That anguish comes and makes me tell
 My ghastly aventure.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
 I have strange power of speech;
 The moment that his face I see 620
 I know the man that must hear me;
 To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
 The Wedding-guests are there;
 But in the Garden-bower the Bride 625
 And Bride-maids singing are:
 And hark the little Vesper-bell
 Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-guest! this soul hath been 630
 Alone on a wide wide sea:
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seem'd there to be.

O sweeter than the Marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me 635
 To walk together to the Kirk
 With a goodly company.

To walk together to the Kirk
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends, 640
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
 And Youths, and Maidens gay.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
 To thee, thou wedding-guest!
 He prayeth well who loveth well, 645
 Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best,
 All things both great and small:
 For the dear God, who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all. 650

The Marinere, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,
 Is gone; and now the wedding-guest
 Turn'd from the bridegroom's door.

My Dear Fellow Sherlockians,

11/17/87

My Interest in Sherlock Holmes, this year (1987), began as a scion venture in my attraction to people and things one-hundred years old. Being part of this Centennial Celebration has been "a most irregular joy!" Dr. Watson's Birthday Potluck was "mouthwatering" in more ways than one: sharing foods, ideas, drawings, and new friends.

As a 5th grade teacher, at Century Elementary, my class develops the year around a theme. How intriguing Sherlock Holmes has been!

From an interest in reading mysteries, we are currently collecting clues to sew onto our Sherlock Holmes Signature Quilt. We are designing our own mystery stories based on Mr. Holmes' scientific theories. We have created self-portraits which include the Sherlockian symbols - hat, pipe, magnifying glass... We have created illustrated scenes and characters for our stories and entered these stories in the Tattered Cover Scarey Story Contest.

Yes, we have written to 221B Baker Street, London, England. We are also using "gourds" and "wool" to "create a Sherlockian character with the Christmas spirit."

"Why?, Elementary, My Dear Watson"

a gourd = a commonplace object, a natural resource, a scientific study ...

wool = a product of England, a deerstalker fabric, ...

"The Spirit of Christmas" = of course, the Christmas Annual, in which "A Study in Scarlet" first appeared.

And now, as our initial problem, for you, our dear fellow Sherlockians, my students and I have placed ... a clue ... an ad ... in the Rocky Mountain News ... classified ... December ... Announcements ... wishing Mr. Sherlock Holmes a Happy 100th Birthday.

Can you find our clue?

♪ We wish you a Merry Christmas, A Happy 100th Birthday, And Happy Hunting ♪ ... sniffing out, if you will ... our

SMALL ADDITION TO SHERLOCKIAN LORE!

A Happy Neglected Patient,

21 Jane Whiteley and Class of 1987-88.

The Bulletin Board

Milestone Publications is offering "A Study in Southsea" by Geoffrey Stravert, a detailed study of Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle's days in Southsea, England, where he gave up the not so lucrative field of medicine for the career of author and creator of Sherlock Holmes. The price is \$16.50 plus \$2.50 for shipping/handling and can be ordered from Milestone at 62 Murray Rd., Horndean, Hampshire, England PO8 9JL.

If you have not yet received a flyer via mail by now, please take note that Neglected Patient William Dorn is publishing, in time for Christmas, "Beeton's Christmas Annual - 1987", containing Blue Carbuncle and two original pastiches, all with new illustrations. For further information on availability and price, write Bill at 2120 S. Monroe St., Denver, CO 80210.

"Sherlock Holmes - A Centennial Symposium" will be held Saturday and Sunday, December 12-13, 1987 at the University of Indiana in Bloomington. Sponsored by the Carfax Press, publishers of "The Sherlock Holmes Review", the symposium will include lectures, panel discussions and presentations. Cost for the symposium is \$15.00 per person, not including meals; there are rooms available at a reasonable cost. For further information and to reserve a space, contact the folks at Indiana University Conference Bureau, Indiana Memorial Union L-9, Bloomington, Indiana 47405.

The Editor has received Vol. 1, No. 2 of "The Twisted Lip" by the Midlothian Mendicants of Midlothian, Texas. Although the scion is still in its infancy, the news from Midlothian is very promising and we hope for them all success and best wishes. A membership and subscription of "The Twisted Lip" can be obtained from John Taylor, Box 804, Midlothian, TX 76065.

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