

# The Litmus Paper

An Irregular Publication by the St. Bartholomew's Chemical Lab,  
A Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars.

Volume 1, Number 7  
Editor In Chief: Debbie Butler

Fall, 1990  
Editor: Larry Feldman

## LAB NOTES

The mornings are a bit cooler and the kids are trudging back to school;



summer is making its last bow. Before you know, the fourteeners will be buried in snow and we'll be into another Colorado winter, whether we want to or not. The Chem Lab has taken a vacation from serious activities this summer, but we did hold two meetings, one in May at the home of Liz and Larry Feldman (just in time, see **ANNOUNCEMENTS**) and a meeting in August at Ron and Mary Lies' home. We spent the time catching up on summer activities. If you haven't noticed by now, the Litmus paper has a slick new format. The Lab's thanks to new publisher and editor Larry Feldman and his other (again, see **ANNOUNCEMENTS**) new "baby", a desktop publishing system. Larry would like to hear your comments about the format. Call him at 871-9572 or drop him a line.

Mr. Tony Harris, the current "Secretary to Sherlock Holmes", visited us from Great Britain last



August. It is Mr. Harris' enviable job to answer all correspondence which comes to 221B Baker Street

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## THE PROFESSOR



Now that fall's here, let's not forget to remember that October 31st is celebrated the world over as the birthday of the late Professor James Moriarty. There has never been a doubt in anyone's mind that the Professor is the most evil one of all. And what a genius! First of all, he had two brothers (one a station master, the other an army Colonel), both with the same first name, just to make him that much harder to identify. Also, though he only figures strongly in three of Sherlock Holmes' published cases, he somehow manages to insert himself into what seems like hundreds of Sherlock Holmes movies, TV episodes, and pastiches. Also, consider this. In *The Final Problem*, Holmes tells Watson about Moriarty, apparently for the first time. But in the later published *Valley of Fear*, Watson seems to be very familiar

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

As hinted at in **LAB NOTES**, The Feldman's blessed event (nine months in the making) came to pass May 21st and a new Sherlockian was launched into the world, thanks to Larry and Liz.



Alexander William Feldman's parents are pleased as all new mommys and daddys

should be, and Master Alexander has already been fitted for houndstooth diapers. Our congratulations to Larry and Liz and all good wishes for happiness and sleepful nights.

Our brother scion, **DOCTOR WATSON'S NEGLECTED PATIENTS**, are hosting a "Movie Night" on November 8th, from 7:00-9:00PM, at the Ross Library in Cherry Creek. Being shown is the movie *Murder By Decree*, starring (believe it or not)



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## NOTICE

The next meeting of the Chem Lab will be held November 10th at the home of Liz and Larry Feldman. It will be "Game Night" and we will be playing some commercial games based on the Master Detective.

The address is; 841 S. Corona Telephone # 871-9572  
Call Larry to RSVP, or for directions.

### THE PROFESSOR

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with the name and all its implications, even though the story obviously takes place some time before **The Final Problem**.

Obviously the man must have some diabolical way to make ordinary Britishers, like Watson, forget who he was, even after Holmes tells them about him. Is it any wonder that I often refer to the late great Napoleon as "The Moriarty of Generals"? Whatever this method for making others forget him may have been, it must have worn off after he was dead because the following poem is said (though by no one very reliable, I assure you) to have been found on the wall of a British tavern sometime around the turn of the century. I invite you to save it and recite it while raising a glass of your favorite poison on the dreaded day, this last of October.

Here's to Moriarty,  
Though he may rot in hell,  
Though never jailed,  
He never failed,  
Except once - when he fell!

I do not talk of James Moriarty,  
The master of his station;  
Nor do I speak of *James* Moriarty,  
A Colonel for his nation.

NO!  
I speak of **JAMES** Moriarty,  
The Napoleon of crime.  
Who met his true found Waterloo,  
In Reichenbach's frothy brine.

And so, to Moriarty,  
Who did those deeds most dastard.  
So now let's toast,  
The Devil's host.  
Here's to you - you bastard!

### WOULD HOLMES HAVE APPROVED OF COMPUTERS?

Sherlock Holmes would have approved of the computer because he believed in using the most up-to-date scientific methods to fight crime. After all, what was his all-encompassing index but a forerunner of the modern database system?

As you may have perceived, we are now using computer technology to enhance the appearance of **THE LITMUS PAPER**. This is the first step in our goal to make our little newsletter into one of the most widely read Sherlockian publications in the country. Our next step will be to include a section for poetry, papers, columns, and reviews of all things Sherlockian. If you would like to contribute something toward this end, please call Larry Feldman at 303-871-9572.



### DEVON CREAM TEA IN CHERRY CREEK?

by Larry Feldman

Not since Sherlock Holmes met "The Tiger Of San Pedro" in **WISTERIA LODGE**, has the culture of Latin America and Great Britain been brought together in such an interesting manner as at **CANO'S COLLECTION AND TEA SHOPPE**. It is located on the second floor of the quiet little mall at 235 Fillmore Street in the Cherry Creek section of Denver. This unique business not only displays and sells interesting crafts and collectibles imported from Mexico, South America, and (get this) Wales, but also serves what must certainly be the most authentic English Tea in this part of the country.

Why such a diverse combination of goods and services? Originally, the enterprise specialized only in Latin American items. Then, when Mr. Cano decided to move back to Mexico, the business was taken over by his wife's parents, **Bud and Joyce Mahn**. Mrs. Mahn

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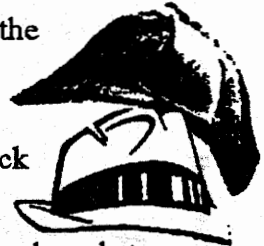
### COMPARISONS

by Larry Feldman

With all the hoopla last summer about Dick Tracy, you might wonder what the attraction was. After all, how could they celebrate a crime fighter so unlike the Master of all crime fighters? Most people associate Tracy with violent gun battles, grotesque villains, and exciting car chases. Why not celebrate a *real* crime fighter, the cerebral Mr. Holmes? If you're like most Sherlockians you probably figure that not since James Bond has any crime fighter been more unlike the sleuth of Baker Street.

And you would be wrong. Not only does the *real* Dick Tracy (the one in the comic strip) have a lot more in common with Sherlock Holmes than most would ever suspect, but there is direct proof that Holmes was the inspiration for Tracy's creation!

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 addressed to the Master Detective. Nancy Iona and Professor William Dorn, of our brother scion DOCTOR WATSON'S NEGLECTED PATIENTS, hosted a warm and wonderful dinner for Mr. Harris and whomever wished to attend at one of the most colorful of our local restaurants, The Fort. Thanks largely to Nancy and Prof. Dorn, Mr. Harris also gave a delightful talk at The Ross Library in Cherry Creek later that week. All those involved in this project deserve our deep felt thanks for taking such good care of Mr. Harris and for sharing him with us



in such a thoughtful, well-planned manner. And speaking of DOCTOR WATSON'S NEGLECTED PATIENTS and Nancy Iona, if you missed the DWNP Annual Picnic and Croquet Match this year at Stern Park, the loss was most certainly yours. A good time was certainly had by all on that beautiful Saturday afternoon. Good conversation was supplemented by excellent food and drink, provided, for the most part, in the form of charming picnic baskets by Vici Linden. And so what if only four people actually played croquet? The fact that one of them was are youngest official member, Master Jason Robinson, somehow made it all the more special. Thanks again Nancy, and other DWNP members, for all your work.



On a more somber note, one of our members, Dennis Ryan, has gotten the tap on the shoulder from Uncle Sam. Dennis, who is in the reserves, has been alerted that his presence is needed to back up the military forces now stationed in Saudi Arabia. We all hope that he won't have to fight Saddam or any of his henchmen and our thoughts are with him and his family.



TEA IN CHERRY CREEK?  
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originally comes from Wales and, well, you can easily imagine the rest. The menu is a small selection of light, delicious items such as "Shepherd's Pie topped w/cheddar cheese" and "Cornish Pasty -beef and vegetables in flaky pastry", to name two. The tea is delectable and placed on the table in a tea pot covered with a hand made tea cozy. Be warned that when you pour yours, it must be done through a strainer as there are no tea bags used *here*, thank you very much. The scones and preserves also do not disappoint. However, this reporter's personal favorite must remain the actual (as in, imported and nothing added to it) Devon cream that is served. I have had what was reported to be imported Devon Cream several times in the States, and I have always been let down. This

is the real thing, and I have tasted nothing so good since my last trip to England. This stuff is so authentic, one taste of it and you will feel like you are on the moor with Henry Baskerville.



Not that the "shoppe" itself isn't also of interest. Not only does it contain a small but attractive assembly of genuine deerstalkers, but most interesting is the collection of Welsh Love Spoons. Each of these decorative wooden spoons is carved in a unique pattern symbolizing some romantic thought or message. According to Mrs. Mahn, the tradition dates back to 16th century Wales where a young man would hand carve one of these spoons and present them to a young lady that he wished to court. If the gift was accepted, the courtship was on. This is evidently where the word "spooning" originates. Anyway, half the fun of looking them over is having the charming Mrs. Mahn (in her Welsh accent) explain the history and symbolism of each individual spoon.

And speaking of the engaging Mrs. Mahn, to give you an idea what she's like, I will relate this anecdote. The last time I was there, she gave my fussing four month old son a personal tour of her establishment so that I could eat my scones and Devon cream in peace. Now, that's what I call service!

Visiting the CANO'S COLLECTION AND TEA SHOPPE is a must for you if you are an Anglophile. And what Sherlockian isn't?

## COMPARISONS -

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My evidence for what may seem to you as a bold and outrageous assertion is of the first order. In an interview published in the book The Celebrated Cases of Dick Tracy (The Wellfleet Press, 1990), Tracy creator Chester Gould is asked if the "hard-boiled school" of detective fiction was an influence on him. To this Gould responds "No, I got most of my inspiration from a boyhood love of Sherlock Holmes."

Indeed, one can see much of Holmes in Tracy. Instead of the deerstalker cap, substitute the distinctive fedora. Instead of the inverness cape, let's give him a yellow raincoat. And, let us not forget the distinctive hawklike profile. But these detectives have more in common than a distinctive look. Despite his rough and tumble reputation, Tracy has always used scientific methods to solve crimes. Tracy believed in preserving footprints, tracing fibers, and locating a villain's hideout by analyzing the dirt on the bottom of a dead henchmen's shoe. Like Holmes, Tracy was always on the cutting edge of crime detecting technology. Inventions such as the "Voice-O-Graf" and the now famous "2-Way Wrist Radio" are examples of this. In fact, some students of crime detection believe that Tracy was the first "Police Procedural". Obviously, Tracy's birth in 1931 came way before the genre made famous by the likes of John Creasey and Ed McBain. At times, the modern detective story seems so far removed from the fog

shrouded, 19th century kind of "cerebral" story that we love so well. I never fail to marvel at the extent to which Sherlock Holmes is linked to so much of what we see today, in whatever genre or format.

In my next article, I'll explain how Arthur Conan Doyle actually created series television. And, if you think I'm kidding, just wait!

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Christopher Plummer and James Mason as Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson. If you've never seen this one, you owe it to yourself to do so, particularly for the famous "Watson And The Peas" scene. I believe I once heard John Shaw refer to Mason as one of the best Watsons of all, based mostly on the strength of this one scene. I hope I'll see you there.

If you need another reason to visit Cherry Creek's new "in a class by itself" mall, here it is. **THE GALLERY OF HISTORY** is a unique collection of interesting historical documents that have been framed and presented in a way that is both eye-catching and intriguing. Included in this collection is the signature of one **Arthur Conan Doyle**, renowned literary agent of our good friend Dr. Watson. As with most of the collection, it is attractively packaged and worth seeing. Just one word of caution. When the fellow showing it to you remarks that he can't believe how inexpensively priced the item is at only \$895.00, try not to look surprised.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Just three quick points to go over with you.

Firstly, how do you like our new format? Like it says in **LAB NOTES**, please call or write and let me know.

Secondly, a word about our numbering. After our last issue, a New York collector called Debbie frantically both demanding to know why and apologizing for the fact that he seemed to have missed an issue. The reason for this is simple. As a scion society of **The Baker Street Irregulars**, we believe that "gifted amateurs" are preferable to "professionals", and that "irregular" is better than what's usual. In this spirit, many Sherlockian publications make claim to being "irregular". Debbie and Jim Butler believe that **THE LITMUS PAPER** goes them all one better with our irregular numbering system. Therefore, despite the fact that this is (I believe) our third issue, we are labeled the seventh issue. Now, does that clear up the confusion? Then perhaps you'll explain it to me!

Lastly, I really need some contributions to this thing. I don't want to be the only byline you see here. If you have ever written or would like to write a short article, paper, or review about anything related to Sherlock Holmes and his world, please step forward. I particularly need someone to write book reviews. I'll even supply the books!

Well, see you next time; in issue #4!



[This paper was written for, and originally presented at, the Third Anniversary Dinner of The Montague Street Lodgers of Brooklyn, circa November, 1988. The dinner took place, as all MSLB meetings do, in a restaurant called Foffe's on Montague Street in the Brooklyn Heights section of Brooklyn, New York.]

## EMILIA LUCCA: FROM BROOKLYN WITH LOVE

By Lawrence Feldman, MSLB

Whenever anniversary time rolls around for the Montague Street Lodgers of Brooklyn (MSLB), I find myself thinking of "The Adventure of the Red Circle" (REDC). There are two very good reasons for this. The first has to do with our very first meeting.

It was in October of '85 that I showed up at a rather typical Brooklyn Italian restaurant. I was fresh from my first brush with actual BSI members and Sherlockians aplenty at my first "Shaw Workshop" two months before, and my cup of enthusiasm did runneth over. I had no idea how many would be at the meeting (ten? twenty?), but I had studied for my quiz and I was ready.

The quiz was written by Tom Uteck. Peter Crupe and I, the only other gentlemen present, took the quiz. Celebrated ASH member Evelyn Herzog was the only other person present. Evelyn chose that evening to exercise her prerogative in accordance with her "special guest" status, and did not participate in that fateful contest. This is something which she has never done since, which goes a long way toward explaining why this was the only MSLB quiz in which I achieved the highest score.

Despite the small turnout, the meeting met with all my fondest expectations. Victory was sweet, and the promise of future such meetings was sweeter.

The quiz, of course, was on "The Adventure of the Red Circle" (REDC).

The reason for Tom's choice of story leads us to the second reason why I will always associate it with the MSLB; even more so than "The Musgrave Ritual" which has heretofore been the MSLB's most honored tale due to the mention therein of what I believe to be the second most important street in The Canon.



But REDC must always fascinate the Sherlockian Brooklynite for a very important reason. That reason is the mysterious dark beauty, Emilia Lucca; the only person in The Canon who is known to have been a Brooklyn resident.

If you recall the story, you will remember it involves Holmes deducing the identity of Mrs. Warren's mysterious never seen lodger. Through his usual brilliant deduction and clever stratagem, the master detective quickly discovers that the lodger is not the bearded gentleman with a foreign accent who rented the room, but an attractive woman whose first language is not English. A few leaps of genius later, Holmes has realized she is receiving messages from a confederate through cryptic advertisements in the Gazette and a simple though cumbersome flash code executed with a candle through a window.

Soon we run into Gregson of the Yard and a Pinkerton detective named Leverton (of the Long Island Cave Mystery fame) who are apparently working on the same case from another angle. Our four heroes then discover the corpse of Black Gorgiano, a killer belonging to the Mafia-like organization called The Red Circle. And then, in walks Emilia.

Emilia claims that Gorgiano was murdered by her husband, Gennaro Lucca. She tells the tale of their both fleeing the Red Circle when, in far off Brooklyn, both love and friendship brought them into conflict with this powerful criminal organization. It is she that is Mrs. Warren's mysterious lodger!



Emilia's importance to our organization comes clear. At every meeting we toast Reginald Musgrave as "The Man Who Went To Montague Street" as well as Sherlock Holmes as the actual "Montague Street Lodger". I hereby propose that we can no longer overlook another important historical personage. Ladies and gentlemen, would you please lift your glasses so that we may toast Emilia Lucca, the Canon's own "Lodger Of (From?) Brooklyn".

One of the main reasons Emilia has remained a rather intriguing personage, is the controversy over the substitution code. The "candle code", as you may recall, was as simple, on the face of it, as can be imagined. One flash for "A", two for "B", etc. Holmes, by counting the flashes, decodes the words "attenta" and "pericolo", the Italian words for "beware" and "danger".

This seemed simple enough until Prof. Louis E. Lord, of the Classics Department of Oberlin College, pointed out that there are no letters "J" or "K" in the Italian alphabet. Since Holmes had no way of suspecting that he was decoding an Italian message, we must assume that he was counting from a standard English alphabet unless he too is a natural born Italian; an idea that I, for one, will not consider. Now, according to Starrett, if you remove the letter "K" from the alphabet, the flashes that would have otherwise gotten you "attenta" produces "aueoua"; a word with all vowels!

Therefore, we can safely conclude that Emilia and her confederate were using an English alphabet.

However, according to what Emilia tells us, the person signaling her was husband Gennaro, a man born and raised in Italy as Emilia was. So, the mystery remains. Why would two people whose first language was Italian use an English alphabet to communicate, in code, in Italian?

And so my friends, once more we stand at the Reichenbachian precipice. Can a mere Sherlockian scholar, using the Master's own methods, unravel this conundrum? Let's wade in.

If we start with the assumption that no two people whose first language was Italian would communicate in this manner - in other words, eliminate the impossible - then we must conclude, however improbable it may seem at first, that either the sender or the receiver (or both) was not Italian. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that Mrs. Lucca's account may not be altogether true. It follows then that her entire story is open to question. This is significant as this story is the source of almost everything we know about the background of the case and, even more importantly, what happened in the murder room.

So, was it the sender, the receiver, or both that was or were not Italian? Well, we know from Holmes' deductions from her "laconic" one-word messages ("match" instead of "matches") as well as from Watson's account of her rapid, fluent, but grammatically unconventional English that an English woman Emilia was not. Emilia had rather a long discourse at the end of the case and if, after this, Watson still believed he was listening to an authentic Italian accent, then it seems at least that there is a plethora of circumstantial evidence that Emilia is a genuine daughter of the small town of Posilippo, Italy. Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that it was the sender, not the receiver, of the message that was more at ease with Shakespeare's language than with da Vinci's.

Where does this leave us? Either the sender was Gennaro Lucca and Emilia is for some reason hiding the fact that he was not actually a born and raised son of Italy or Gennaro himself (or at least his participation in this case) is a complete fabrication. Since I can think of no earthly reason for the former possibility, lets

take the latter as a working hypothesis and see where it leads us.

This possibility gains credibility when we remember that nobody in this case ever actually sees Gennaro Lucca. We truly only have Emilia's word that he exists at all. But if Gennaro Lucca was not the sender of the coded messages, then who was?

Well, there are certain assumptions we can make about him. 1) His first language is English (or, at least, it is not Italian). 2) Mrs. Warren described him as a well-dressed man with a beard and a foreign accent. 3) He is someone connected with the case. 4) We know from his messages in the Gazette that his first initial was "G".

I believe that there is only one explanation that covers these facts. No matter how improbable it may seem, now that we have eliminated the impossible, it is all that is left and therefore, as the Master's famous aphorism tells us, it must be the truth. And the truth is this: Gregson and Leverton conspired with fair Emilia to cover up their righteous execution of the killer Gorgiano!

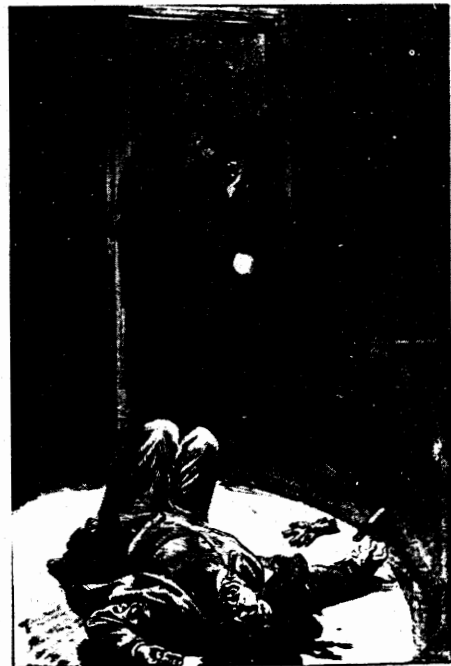
See now how it all falls into place. It was Gregson whose telltale first initial was attached to the agony column ads in the Gazette. It was Leverton, in a false beard, that rented the room and whose American accent struck the British Mrs. Warren as foreign sounding. It was the two men who signaled Emilia with their code based on the standard English alphabet (perhaps providing her with an alphabet board with numbers next to the letters to help her in decoding) and warned her of danger in her own language. Finally, it would take two trained detectives to take on the deadly Gorgiano (fifty times a murderer!) and kill him with his own knife.

Imagine their surprise as they leave the scene of their deadly deed (I shall not call it a crime) only to find Holmes and Watson on their way up to it. Of course they must stop Holmes or at least delay him and find out exactly what he knows. And what better pretext to do this than that of comparing notes on the case?

Later in the "murder room", Emilia walks in. Can you recall her first words? "You have killed him," she says to her co-conspirators. Upon realizing that Holmes and Watson are present, she either invents or falls back on a pre-arranged story: the fantasy that was - Gennaro Lucca!

Now, how did this all come about? Here we can only speculate. According to the Barring-Gould chronology we have last seen Gregson in 1890 in "Wisteria Lodge". He places REDC in 1902. During these twelve years any one of a number of adventures could have taken place that would explain Gregson's absence from the Canonical scene. One could certainly have involved spending some time with the Pinkertons in America. At any rate, it seems probable that Leverton has some relationship with Emilia and that either Leverton or Emilia developed enough of a relationship with Gregson to see them through. Is it possible that all three worked for the Pinkerton Agency and had somehow been forced to flee a dreaded enemy, even as Holmes himself had fled from Moriarity some years before? As you will recall, that adventure also resulted in the death of the villain at the hero's hand.

There is one other interesting field for speculation. Did Holmes know the truth? I have wondered whether Holmes' Shakespearian misquote with which he greeted Gregson and Leverton, "Journeys end with lovers' meetings," was perhaps more fraught with meaning than Watson ever suspected. Did Holmes know of some romantic relationship between one of the men and Emilia? I, for one, would like to think that Holmes did understand what was going on and also understood the justice inherent in Gregson's actions and the importance of keeping this from Watson and his readership. We know

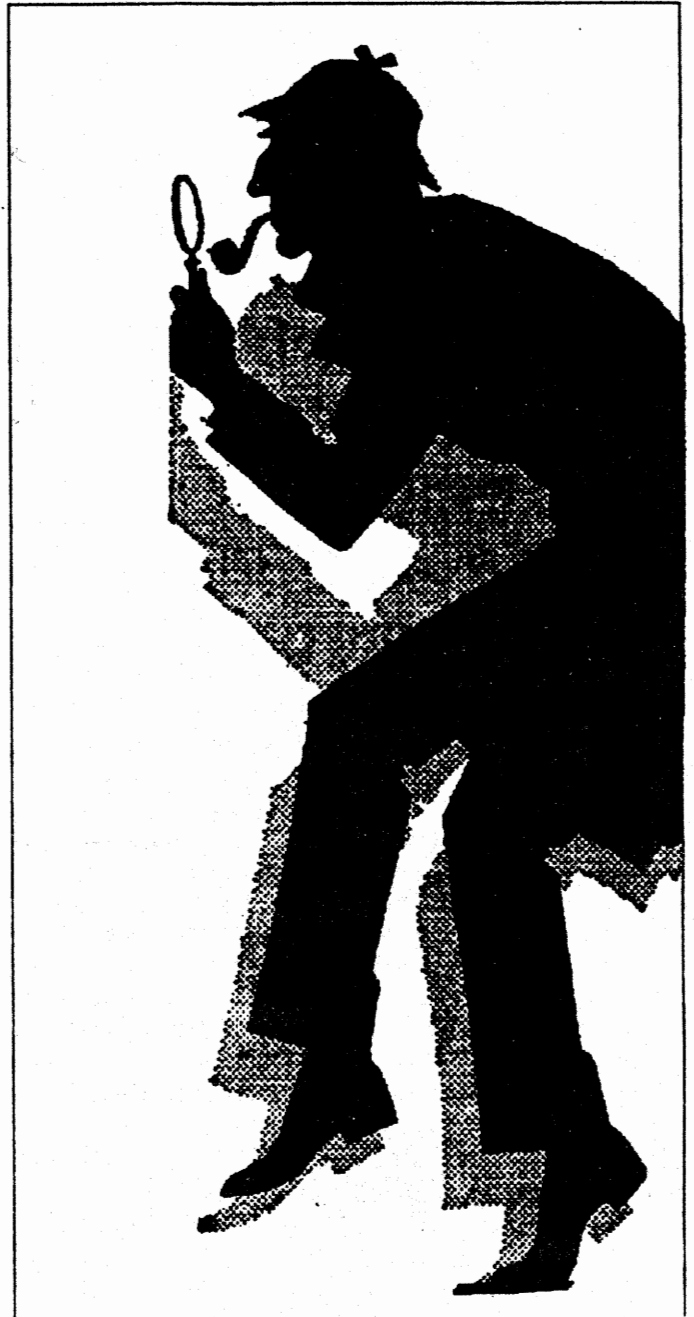


"BY GEORGE! IT'S BLACK GORGIANO HIMSELF!" CRIED THE AMERICAN DETECTIVE.

from cases like "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" and "The Abbey Grange" that Holmes believed more firmly in right and wrong than he did in the letter of the law. I am sure that Holmes would not have wanted to see his old friend from the Yard end his career in shame and disgrace. He would have kept the secret.

And so, I hope I have convinced you, whether or not you choose to agree with my explication of this case, that there is much more than meets the eye in this meeting of a certain former "Montague Street Lodger" and a certain former "Lodger of Brooklyn". And, as we sit here on a street called Montague in a borough called Brooklyn, we can but gaze at the rich distant panorama that is the Canon and wonder at its mysteries, delight in its follies, thrill to its dramas, and, of course, drink.

[Illustrations by H.M. Brock for STRAND MAGAZINE, April, 1911]



"I've found it! I've found it!" he shouted.