

# The Bilge Pump

Vol. 09, No. 05 - May, 2021

*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the  
Barque Lone Star - founded April, 1970*



## PLEASE NOTE:

### June 06, Meeting NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on June 06 at 1:00 pm. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott".

Our Special Guest Speakers will be **Greg Ruby, BSI, ASH**, who will present on Coins of the Victorian Period; and **Brad Keefauver, BSI, ASH**, who will speak on "Chronology for Fun and Profit."

---

We will cover topic 11 on "The Life and Times of Arthur Conan Doyle: Non-Canonical Writings (The Supernatural Stories) by **Nancy Holder, BSI**."

## May 02, Summary

There were 54 in attendance at this ZOOM meeting. The meeting started out with a wonderful toast her first encounter with Sherlock Holmes by **Ann Caddell** (see page 3).

We then conducted the monthly quiz on the story "The Stockbroker's Clerk," which was won by a host of participants (I really need to make the tests harder).

**Donny Zaldin, BSI, ASH**, provided us with a fabulous toast to underappreciated Mrs. Henry Baker (see page 5).

**Robert Katz, BSI, ASH**, once again led a great discussion on "The Stockbroker's Clerk", focusing on typhoid fever and George Budd. We are so indebted to Bob doing this each month.

Our special guest speaker was **Mark Jones**, who gave us a new perspective on reading the Canon. Mark had all the attendees laughing continuously with his Cockneyed adaptation of the monthly story.

We then went to the lightning round quiz for the day, based on canonical murder scenes. **Rob Nunn** took the prize this month.

Next, we had a wonderful presentation given by **Mark Alberstat, BSI**, which focused on Arthur Conan Doyle as an athlete and his love of bicycling.

The meeting was adjourned and a good time was had by all.

As always, thanks to Cindy Brown for taking the minutes of the meeting.



For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/>

You can follow us on Twitter at: @barquelonestar

You can friend us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar>

### Who dunnit:



Third Mate  
Helmsman  
Spiritual Advisors  
  
Secretaries  
Historian  
Webmaster

Steve Mason  
Walter Pieper  
Don Hobbs, BSI  
Dr. Jim Webb, BSI  
Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison  
Pam Mason  
Rusty Mason

[mason.steve@epa.gov](mailto:mason.steve@epa.gov)  
[waltpieper@att.net](mailto:waltpieper@att.net)  
[221b@verizon.net](mailto:221b@verizon.net)  
[jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com)  
  
[myrkrid08@yahoo.com](mailto:myrkrid08@yahoo.com)

### Our Website:

[www.dfw-sherlock.org](http://www.dfw-sherlock.org)



### Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar/>

# "TOAST TO CHRISTOPHER MORLEY"

Presented by Ann Caddell

I had my first encounter with Sherlock Holmes when I was fourteen and spent my summer vacation reading my parents' 1938 edition of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* cover to cover. What I didn't appreciate at the time was that the preface to this hefty volume was written by Christopher Morley. Years later, as a confirmed Sherlockian, I have a new appreciation for Christopher Morley, his charming preface, and his many other contributions to the Sherlockian world we enjoy today.

Morley was a prime example of that early 20th century type, the all-around man of letters. He wrote novels, newspaper columns, and magazine articles, and helped found and edit the *Saturday Review of Literature*. He also loved to hang out with other literary lights of the time, and that's where his greatest contribution to Sherlockiana comes in.

Morley enjoyed eating meals with his literary friends, forming informal clubs for just that purpose. During the 1920s the "Three Hours for Lunch Club" met periodically at speakeasies around Manhattan. Many of the regulars shared an interest in the Sherlock Holmes stories, and Morley called them

together for a special cocktail party on January 6, 1934 to celebrate what Morley had determined was Holmes's birthday. Three weeks later, in describing the event, Morley published the first known mention of the Baker Street Irregulars in his column in the *Saturday Review*. The report included a discussion of the matter of an official toast to be drunk to "The Woman." This emphasis on the proper use of adult beverages has stayed with the BSI and its scions ever since.

Morley continued to report on BSI doings in the *Saturday Review*. He set its first formal dinner for June 5, open to anyone (well, just any men, but that's a story for another time) who successfully completed his brother Frank's Sherlock Holmes Crossword Puzzle.

The official "first annual" dinner followed on December 7, 1934, with Sherlockian luminaries like actor William Gillette, illustrator Frederick Dorr Steele, and writer Vincent Starrett. The BSI didn't officially meet again until 1936, but by then scion societies had already begun forming. Morley gradually retreated from the work of keeping the BSI going, but others stepped up, and the BSI has met every year since 1940.



In 1942, Morley wrote a poem called "Sonnet on Baker Street" that made its debut in a little holiday pamphlet along with Vincent Starrett's more famous "221B." Nearly all

Sherlockians are familiar with Starrett's sonnet, but Morley's is less well-known than it should be. So I'd like to close with a reading of "Sonnet On Baker Street:"

Quick Watson, quick! (he says) the game's afoot:  
Perhaps it's only Scandal in Bohemia,  
Or maybe Speckled Band, or Devil's Root,  
Or famous sleuth who's dying of Anaemia --  
The Dancing Men, Chicago's smartest crooks  
Have given us the code; we'll fool that party: --  
These are not merely episodes in books,  
But the crusade of Holmes and Moriarty.

So bring the fiddle and the dressing gown,  
And Mrs. Hudson, and brave Scotland Yard,  
And Watson by the Jezail bullet lamed—  
We rattle in a hansom back to town.  
If this is fancy, history's debarred;  
If this is fiction, let fact be ashamed.



And let US raise our glasses to Christopher Morley!

STARBUCKS LONESTAR

# 2021 R. Joel Senter, Sr. Essay Contest

The Beacon Society is proud to announce the winners of the 2021 R. Joel Senter, Sr. Essay Contest. Each of the winners will receive a cash award and plaque. Thanks so much to the Awards Committee and Carolyn Senter for making this possible.



7th - 9th Grades:

- 1st Place — **Kaitlyn Polchow**
- 2nd Place — **Ryan Foley**
- 3rd Place — **Emily Genter & Sabrina Kim**

10th - 12 Grades:

- 1st Place — **Juliana Schoepner**
- 2nd Place — **Eleanor Hébert**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place — **Andrew Quiñones**



We will be posting the winning essays on the Beacon Society website ([www.beaconsociety.com](http://www.beaconsociety.com)) in the next week.

**Congratulations to these younger Sherlockians for keeping Sherlock Holmes alive, as well as honoring the memory of Joel Senter.**

# "TOAST TO MRS. HENRY BAKER (by Mr. HENRY BAKER)"

Presented by Donny Zaldin, BSI, ASH, MBt

Donny Zaldin is a longtime member of The Bootmakers of Toronto (Canada), The Sherlock Holmes Society of London in the U.K., the Sherlock Holmes Society of India, and several American societies including The Barque of the Lone Star; and, he has contributed to Sherlockian and Doylean scholarship for over three decades as author and editor to international books, journals and websites.



Over the years, I have attended many Sherlockian events at which a toast was offered to a Canonical character. Commonly, that character is Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, a Scotland Yarder, or a villain such as "the Napoleon of crime" or "the second most dangerous man in London." Favorite female figures include "the woman," "a certain gracious lady" or a long-suffering, Scotchwoman landlady. Non-human subjects include the four-legged, giant "hound from hell" and the legless "swamp adder." In my experience, of the two-legged honorees, men far outnumber women in being feted with a toast. To adjust this gender bias which I perceive in Sherlockian toasts and to allow Canonical women to break through this form of 19th-century "glass" ceiling, I propose the following toast to *Mrs. Henry Baker*.



Sherlock Holmes successfully determined my identity by making deductions from clues associated with my hat, recovered by Peterson, the commissioner, when I was separated from it and a Christmas goose by a gang of roughs in Tottenham Court Road about four o'clock on Christmas morning in

1889.

From my hat, Sherlock Holmes deduced that:

- (1) I am highly intellectual;
- (2) I was fairly well-to-do within the last 3 years, although I had fallen on evil days;
- (3) I had foresight but now have less of it than formerly, pointing to a moral retrogression, which when taken with the decline of my fortunes, seemed to indicate some evil influence, probably drink at work upon me;
- (4) My wife had ceased to love me;
- (5) I have retained some degree of self-respect;
- (6) I lead a sedentary life, go out little, am out of training, am middle-aged, have grizzled hair which I have cut within the last few days and which I anoint with lime-cream; and



I am *Henry Baker*, the focus of "an intellectual problem," "one of those whimsical little incidents" which – as the famous consulting detective Sherlock Holmes points out – "will happen when you have four million human beings all jostling each other within the space of a few square miles," producing "every possible combination of events" including the "striking and bizarre."

I am delighted to offer a toast to my dearly departed wife, *Mrs. Henry Baker*, at this Zoom story meeting of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

(7) It is extremely improbable that I have gas laid on in my house.

However, while Watson sees “nothing,” in my case, I say that Holmes sees little and *assumes much*, and in doing so, gives great offense to me by his completely erroneous deduction about the love Mrs. Baker and I shared during the many years we lived as husband and wife.

The facts about which Mr. Holmes is entirely correct are that:

- (1) I am an educated man;
- (2) I was fairly well-to-do - until my wife, Mrs. Henry Baker, of blessed memory, passed away recently;
- (3) My fortunes have declined but I try to maintain my self-respect for myself - and my widowed mother, who lives with me; and
- (4) I lead a sedentary, middle-aged life, and keep my hair short and anointed with lime-cream.

The facts about which Holmes is entirely *mistaken or unaware* are that:

- (1) I am Henry Baker, known as Jr. until my father, Henry Baker Sr., passed away about a decade ago;
- (2) The goose was for my aged mother, Mrs. Henry Baker, widow of my late father;
- (3) My beloved wife and I loved each other very much until the good Lord disturbed the marital harmony and bliss we shared and took her from me, breaking my heart in the process;
- (4) I venerate and cherish my hat in lasting remembrance of my loving wife, who bought it for me as an anniversary present years ago and maintained it meticulously until her passing - but I am not nearly as regular in brushing it as she was;
- (5) I frequent the Alpha Inn to share a pint or two with my mates to fill the time which I previously devoted

to my faithful wife, and I was indeed returning home from some small jollification on Christmas morning. However, the decline in my fortunes is attributable to the loss of my dear wife, not the evil influence of drink; and

- (6) I *have* gas laid in on the main floor of my flat where my mother’s bed chamber is located, but not on the upper level where my bed chamber is located.

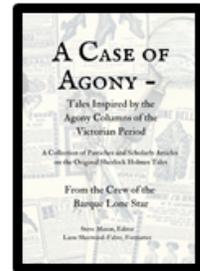
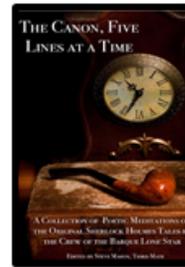
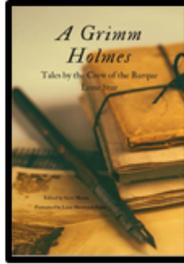
Having corrected Holmes, I now understand that the Countess of Morcar has offered a £1,000 reward for the return of the Blue Carbuncle. You should all know that I am fair-minded and therefore willing to share the reward with Mr. Holmes and Mr. Peterson, the commissionaire, without whom I would not only have lost Christmas dinner for me and my widowed mother, but I would have lost claim to the reward for the missing, “brilliantly scintillating” and “absolutely unique” gemstone. Apparently, “the precious stone” is “of such purity and radiance that it twinkle[s] like an electric point in the dark hollow of [one’s] hand,” with a value which can “only be conjectured,” but is “certainly” *more than twenty times* the amount of the reward offered.

I am, of course, indebted to Mr. Holmes - but given his erroneous deductions about me from my hat, perhaps – if it should ever “strike” Dr. Watson that Mr. Holmes is “getting a little over-confident in [his] powers, or giving less pains to a case than it deserves,” – I would be “infinitely obliged” if the good doctor would “kindly whisper” ‘Baker’ rather than ‘Norbury’ “in [his] ear.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in a toast to my much-loved and sorely-missed wife, who presented me with my humble hat and lovingly cared for it and for me over the many happy years we were so fortunate to spend together.

**Cheers to my beloved late wife, Mrs. Henry Baker!**

**The Crew of the  
Barque Lone Star  
Society is producing  
our 5<sup>th</sup> book as part of  
our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**



For this year, we are asking for members to submit a short paper on what Sherlock Holmes means to them... This could involve many things: how you met Sherlock, what has kept you involved in this passion for years, how did Sherlock help you through the past year or so, etc. This could be very insightful if we get to relive your wild childhood reading or watching Sherlock.

1. You can use any format you feel most comfortable writing – such as, essay, pastiche, poem, limerick, radio play, or even artwork
2. Your paper should not exceed 1,500 words, so that our book does not have more pages than a dictionary... Obviously, a shorter paper is fine.
3. Feel free to include with your story a photo of you dressed as Sherlock Holmes or any artwork you may have done in the past...
4. Your story will be edited by one or two member volunteer editors, but only for grammar, typos... we will not edit the content of your story.
5. This project is not limited to just those members in the DFW area. Any member (if you're getting this email) is welcome to submit a paper.
6. We plan to finalize the anthology by the end of the calendar year, so we ask for members to submit their entry by August 31.

The final product will be put together in book form and posted on our website and shared with all society members as a .pdf file. We plan on publishing copies of the book as a gift for those who submit a piece.

Our Society has a wonderful website, chocked full of Sherlockian items. Visit us at...  
[www.dfw-sherlock.org](http://www.dfw-sherlock.org)

If you would like to participate, you can email us at:  
[mason.steve8080@gmail.com](mailto:mason.steve8080@gmail.com)



# BICYCLES IN THE CANON

Franklin Saskena, MD, BSI

Greetings fellow Sherlockians

Although the wheel had been invented several thousand years ago it was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the bicycle was invented as an efficient method of transport. (fig 1).

In 1817 the Draisine bicycle was made almost entirely of wood & was propelled by moving one's feet back and forth. (2,5)

In 1863 the French devised the velocipede ("the boneshaker"), the first mechanized bike which had rotary cranks and pedals mounted to the front wheel hub.

Bicycling enabled a person to travel 3-4 times the speed of an average walker and became a popular means of transportation. (Fig 2a-b) (5).

It played a role in the emancipation of women who were now free to travel all over the countryside with little or no escorts. (1)

The bicycle is mentioned at least 5 times in the Canon



Fig 2b. Family of cyclists 1900, commented favorably by Queen Victoria. (4)

The disadvantage of the velocipede was that one revolution of the pedals advanced the rider only 10 feet (=the circumference of the front wheel) whereas the modern bike will advance  $\geq 16$  ft with one revolution of the pedals. (2,5)

Starley developed the Penny farthing to overcome this low gear ratio of the velocipede.

The Penny farthing consisted of a front wheel 60 inches in diameter and a rear wheel 20 inches in diameter, (Fig 3) so 1 revolution of the pedals advanced a person 16 feet.

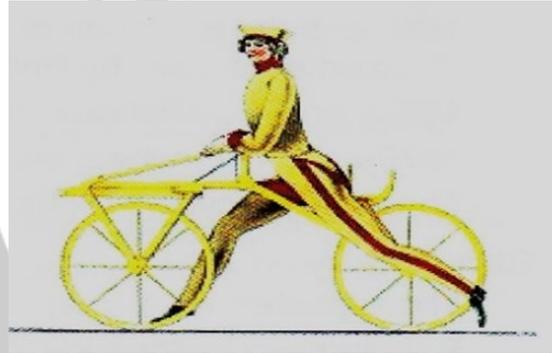


Fig 1. Drais bicycle 1817 (2)



Fig2 a Cycling group of men and women pedaling around the countryside in 1904(4)

In the Five Orange pips story (published in 1891) Joseph Openshaw opened a bicycle store in Coventry and patented the Openshaw unbreakable tire.

Coventry was one of the main centers for the bicycle industry. It was started in 1870 by Starley and his family and was originally based on the French velocipede.

This too had its problems: there was difficulty in mounting a 60 inch diameter wheel and falls were frequent and often resulted in serious injury. (2,5)

In 1876, Starley invented the tricycle as a way of avoiding these problems.

He also added the differential gear to the tricycle which allows the effort to spread evenly between the wheels and yet allows the wheels to rotate at slightly different speeds when turning a corner. Queen Victoria purchased 2 such tricycles which popularized their use for women. (5)

In the Solitary Cyclist story, Holmes deduces that Violet Smith rides a bike based on the roughened edge of the sole of her shoe ,presumably caused by rubbing against the pedal. (3)

Roughening of the edge of the sole could have also have been due to some other local trauma. The deduction could have some credibility if she was also wearing cycling clothes such as a divided skirt, skirts shortened with draw strings or even bloomers (named after Amelia Bloomer). (1,2)

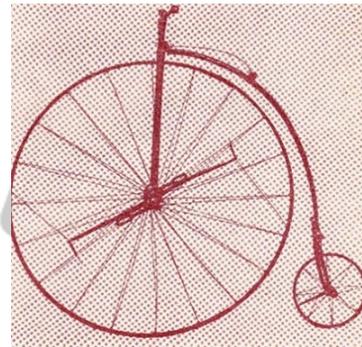


Figure 3.  
Penny  
farthing  
bicycle  
1870(5)



However, the type of clothing Violet Smith was wearing is not mentioned, so the 1903 Illustration (Fig 4) showing her riding a bicycle wearing ankle length clothing may or may not be valid. The bike depicted is probably accurate and looks like a Rover safety bike.

This bike, introduced in 1885 by J.K Starley has most of the features we see in a modern day bike: rear wheel chain and sprocket drive with a geared up transmission, a steerable front wheel, equal sized wheels, ball bearings in the wheel hubs, tangentially mounted wire spokes, light weight tubular steel construction and a drop frame to accommodate women's clothes(5)

In the Priory school story (1904) Holmes stated that he could recognize the tread in 42 such bicycles 2 of which are mentioned in the story: Palmer and Dunlop.

Holmes is asked to find the whereabouts of Lord Saltire, son of the Duke of Holderness. The half-brother James Wilder meets with Lord Saltire one night and tells him to meet a man(Rueben Hayes) who will lead him to his mother.

Saltire leaves his dormitory the next night for the meeting and is followed by the German schoolmaster, Mr Heidigger on his Palmer bicycle.

Following the trail of the Palmer tire marks Holmes was able to find the body of Heidigger who had been killed by Rueben Hayes There were also, Dunlop tire marks seen near the school which later become untraceable.

These tire marks later turned out to belong to James Wilder's bicycle who had arranged for the kidnapping of Saltire by Rueben Hayes.

J.B. Dunlop MD is famous for the invention of the air filled or pneumatic tire in 1888 which quickly replaced solid rubber tires, thus making for a smoother ride.(2,5)

How to determine which way a bicycle is travelling was discussed in a prior Criterion bar association issue. (Oct 2017 volume 23, no 1)

In the Missing three quarters story Holmes is asked to find what happened to Godfrey Staunton and learns that Dr Armstrong knows his whereabouts. Holmes used the convenience of a bicycle to follow Dr Armstrong's carriage. As the countryside was flat ,Holmes was easily spotted and eventually lost track of his quarry.

In the Valley of Fear, Ted Baldwin comes to England to kill Birdy Edwards, alias John Douglas. Birdy Edwards was responsible for rounding up the villainous Scrowers of which Ted Baldwin was a member. In the ensuing fight, Baldwin is killed by Douglas. Douglas then changes clothes with the dead man to pretend that he was the victim and not Baldwin. Ted Baldwin's abandoned Rudge-Whitworth bicycle was found in the bushes within 100 yards of Mr Douglas's house. The police were baffled why the assassin left his bike behind.

Inquiring at the village hotels they were able to identify that the owner was an American (that very much resembled Douglas). This bicycle inquiry was one of many clues that helped to solve the mystery of the murder at Birlstone Manor.

Of interest is that Rudge-Whitworth bicycles were being manufactured in 1895 using a thin-walled tube for construction of the bike frame , ideal for resisting tension, compression and torsion. (2,5)

Such bikes can weight as little as 20lb and could be used for a quick get-away, especially if it was also equipped with an additional gear changing device (derailleur-1903)

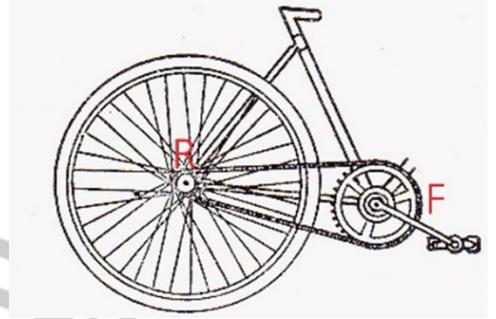
The evolving development of the bicycle and its effect on society is seen in the Canon and often provided clues to solving a crime (PRIO, VALL)

Wilson (5) also pointed out that many of the advances in bicycle mechanics were applied to the automobile and to the aeroplane (The Wright brothers were originally bicycle manufacturers)

## References

1. Bicycling and feminism. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bicycling\\_and\\_feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bicycling_and_feminism) 2/9/21
2. History of the bicycle. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_bicycle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_bicycle). 2/9/21
3. Klinger, L. The new annotated Sherlock Holmes WW Norton, NY.2005;2:901-931
4. White, HE, Ramsey G. Pageant of the Century. 1900-1933. Odham press, London p39.p121

5. Wilson SS. Bicycle technology. Scientific American March 1973 pp 81-91



Questions for the reader:

In a bicycle the front and back gear wheels are connected by a chain. The front sprocket (F) has 32 teeth and the rear sprocket (R) on the rear wheel has 8 teeth. If a person drives the front sprocket at 10 r.p.m., find the rpm of the rear wheel

How far does the above bicycle travel with one revolution of the pedals if the diameter of the rear wheel is 24 inches?



# THE FINE ART OF COLLECTING

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

A number of collectors and collections appear in the Canon. Among them are Jack Stapleton from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, known for his butterfly and moth collection; Colonel Barclay had a weapons collection in “The Adventure of the Crooked Man;” and Baron Adelbert Gruner’s tastes ran to women and Chinese pottery in “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client.”

Holmes and Watson are not above their own collections. Holmes has scrapbooks where he catalogs items, such as biographical information, and Watson, notes and objects from their various cases.

While the interest and art of collecting can be traced back to ancient times (Caesar referred to a “collection” as a gathering of things, and Aristotle had a herbarium), the hobby truly gained momentum in the Middle Ages and is considered an important characteristic of human society. (1)

Assembling and organizing objects, such as from various cultures and societies, offer a different context for the items as they are grouped in ways not seen in nature and provide new insights into their character. (2)

The reasons behind collecting vary, but pleasure provides the basis for the desire. Finding, obtaining, and reviewing one’s collection feed into the pleasure center.

Acquiring a rare piece can produce pride in the owner and admiration from fellow collectors.



Others enjoy the thrill of the chase and attaining one’s goal. When the objects are antiques, the collection can provide the person with a sense of history, or an intellectual satisfaction. (3)

Collecting became a major interest for the nobility and landed gentry during the 1700s and 1800s. These aristocratic collectors

traveled far and wide to obtain different objects (based on their interest)—art, books, animal specimens, etc.—and stored them in their “cabinets of curiosities.”

Such rooms, designed for keeping them safe as well as permit private viewing, served to indicate the nobleman’s power and wealth. (4) Among the most famous during this period was Stephen W. Bushnell, a Victorian authority on Chinese porcelain.

He collected pieces while serving as a physician in Peking (Beijing) and later produced a number of books on the subject, increasing the interest of such works in the West. (5) No doubt some of Watson’s cramming on Chinese pottery before meeting with Baron Gruner included Bushnell’s research.

Perhaps the epitome of such a hobbyist in the Canon would be Nathan Garrideb, who housed his collection in a room that appeared “like a small museum,” and dreamed of being a second “Hans Sloane.”

An eighteenth-century physician, Sir Hans Sloane began collecting while serving as the Jamaican governor’s physician. While in that colony, he



assembled more than 800 plants (along with specimens of animals and other curiosities) that served as the basis for his natural history work on the flora and fauna of the British Caribbean colonies.

He continued to collect items from travelers after he returned to Britain, as well as absorbing other collectors' inventories. In 1753, he willed his collection to the Crown, with the condition that it be housed in a public museum. Parliament responded by creating the British Museum, using his collection as its base. (6)

As Nathan Garrideb illustrates, however, collecting can have drawbacks. Watson describes the man as "round-backed" and "cadaverous" because he never exercises and prefers to spend his time admiring his collection.

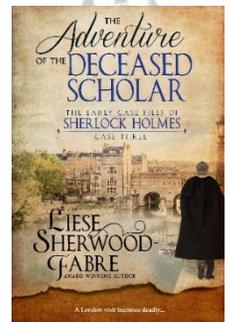
While not enough information exists on the man's habits to determine whether his collecting has moved into the mental disorder of "hoarding," his behavior does suggest a pattern in that direction. (7)

Of course, Sherlock has his own hoarding tendencies, mostly related to the newspapers he carefully catalogs at some point after filling every corner with them, but just as important is Watson's, who pulled from them the sixty cases that make up the Canon.

For both men, their habits did not hinder their abilities to serve as a team to solve the most intriguing of cases, but instead enhanced them.

- (1) <https://lignup.com/collectibles/103-history.html>
- (2) <https://historyjournal.org.uk/2021/01/27/collecting-contexts-why-do-we-collect/>
- (3) <https://coinweek.com/education/want-stuff-eight-views-psychology-collecting/>
- (4) <https://nationalpsychologist.com/2007/01/the-psychology-of-collecting/10904.html>
- (5) <https://www.hcplive.com/view/the-psychology-of-collecting>
- (6) <https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us/british-museum-story/sir-hans-sloane>
- (7) Monica Schmidt, "You Have Been on eBay, I Perceive: the Psychopathology of Sherlockian Hoarding," Baker Street Journal, Volume 69, No. 1 (Spring 2019), pp 26-30.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre's third book in "The Early Case Files of Sherlock Holmes" releases on May 15. You can find it at your favorite bookseller's Website listed here: <https://books2read.com/u/3LYAYw>



# UN GRAND TALENT POUR LE SILENCE

Karen Murdock

Originally published in *The Petrel Flyer* / (Vancouver, British Columbia) / Volume 20, number 5 (Fall 2008)

In “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” Watson unexpectedly encounters Sherlock Holmes in an opium den on a “vile alley” just to the east of London Bridge. The two leave the “vilest murder-trap on the whole riverside” and drive off in “a tall dog-cart” that Holmes had left lurking nearby.

Holmes takes the reins for “a seven-mile drive” from Upper Swandam Lane to The Cedars, the house of Mr. and Mrs. Saint Clair near Lee in Kent. Watson continues the narrative:

*Holmes drove in silence, with his head sunk upon his breast, and the air of a man who is lost in thought, whilst I sat beside him curious to learn what this new quest might be which seemed to tax his powers so sorely, and yet afraid to break in upon the current of his thoughts. We had driven several miles, and were beginning to get to the fringe of the belt of suburban villas, when he shook himself, shrugged his shoulders, and lit up his pipe with the air of a man who has satisfied himself that he is acting for the best.*

*“You have a grand gift of silence, Watson,” said he. “It makes you quite invaluable as a companion.”*

Richard Lancelyn Green (1953-2004), who annotated the story for *The Oxford Holmes* (1993), gave this endnote to Holmes’s observation about Watson:

*You have a grand gift of silence, Watson:* a phrase taken from Robert Louis Stevenson, to which ACD refers in his article on ‘Mr. Stevenson’s Methods in Fiction’: ‘Mr. Stevenson, like one of his own characters, has an excellent gift of silence’ (*National Review*, Jan. 1890)

Green may be correct in his attribution of where Arthur Conan Doyle got the phrase “gift of silence.” He got it

from Stevenson. But where did Stevenson (1850-1894) get it?

Possibly he got it from Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), who—like Doyle and Stevenson—was Scottish. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd ed. (1953) gives this entry under Carlyle:

I hope we English will long maintain our grand talent pour le silence.

(*Heroes and Hero-Worship*, 1841,  
“The Hero as King”)

Where, then, did Carlyle get the quote? Presumably from some French person, since the quote is in French.

A website of French quotes

(<http://www.bribes.org/silence.htm>) attributes the quote to the French critic Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr (1808-1890), who wrote in *Une poignée de vérités* (1866)

*Ce n’était pas un compliment sans portée que celui qu’on faisait en disant d’un homme : “Il a un grand talent pour le silence.”*

[This was not a compliment without range that one made by saying of a man: “He has a great talent for silence.”]

However, the phrase must obviously predate 1866, since Carlyle used it in 1841.

In *Sketches of Switzerland* (published 1836) the American author James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) recalled his trip to Switzerland in 1828. He wrote of a traveling party of English guests who stayed at his hotel

*even the servants appearing more sulky and dogged than English servants in general, which is*

*saying a good deal for those who have un si grand talent pour le silence*

But the phrase is older yet. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) used it in a letter to John B.S. Morritt in 1818:

*Colonel MacLeod leaves us this morning after a visit of about a week: he improves on acquaintance and especially seems so pleased with everything that it would be very hard to quarrel with him. Certainly as the Frenchman said il a un grand talent pour le silence.*

[www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/etexts/etexts/letters5.PDF](http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/etexts/etexts/letters5.PDF)

The English novelist Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) toured the continent of Europe around 1802. In her 1809 novel *Ennui*, she wrote:

*As the Frenchman said of the Englishman, for whom even his politeness could not find another*

*compliment, 'Il faut avouer que ce Monsieur a un grand talent pour le silence.'*

[It is necessary to acknowledge that this gentleman has a great talent for silence.]

In his *Autobiography* (1859), Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) attributes the phrase to Madame de Staël (Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein, 1766-1817), who, in describing the Earl of Liverpool, is said to have remarked

*"Ces Anglais ont un grand talent pour le silence"*

Other online sources credit Napoleon (1769-1821) or Talleyrand (1754-1838) with the phrase "un grand talent pour le silence" used to describe the taciturn British. I give up the chase. All I am willing to venture is that Robert Louis Stevenson was not the original source. And that the phrase was common in Great Britain by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And that William Baring-Gould and Les Klinger were wise to ignore it in their annotated editions of the Sherlockian Canon. Let a wise silence prevail on the subject.

# HERLOCK SHOLMES - The Case of the American Millionaire

Charles Hamilton (Peter Todd), January 22, 1916, *The Greyfriars Herald*

Another Grand Story dealing with the Amazing Adventures of Herlock Sholmes, Detective.

## Chapter 1

The name of Ephraim Z. Squawk, the millionaire Beef King of Chicago, was, of course, well known to us.

The enormous number of tins he exported yearly, and the mystery surrounding their contents, had made him an interesting figure.

I could not help regarding him with some curiosity as he was shown into our sitting-room at Shaker Street.

Herlock Sholmes had been about to make one of his accustomed inroads upon the cask of cocaine.

He rose, however, and yawned in the polished and courteous manner so characteristic of him.

The millionaire, who in features somewhat resembled a hatchet, was pale and agitated.

"Mr. Sholmes," he said, "I guess I want your help. I calculate if you work the riffle, you can count out your own spondulics. A gripful of greenbacks more or less cuts no ice with me. I guess I am up against it, and it's a regular cinch for that hoodlum who is after me!"

Sholmes, who speaks American like a native, nodded.

As on so many occasions, his gifts as a linguist stood him in good stead.

"Pray give me a few details, Mr. Squawk," he remarked. "You may speak quite freely before my friend Dr. Jotson."

The millionaire sat down and glared at the fender, and then under the table, and then into the fire, and told his story.

"I guess I wasn't always what I am now, Mr. Sholmes. Jest now, the name of Ephraim Z. Squawk is known throughout the world as the biggest exporter, sir, in all Chicawgo. Squawk's American beef is known wherever the American language is spoken. But at one time, sir, I was simply manager of a canning works in Chicawgo. It was then that it happened."

"What happened, Mr. Squawk?"

"The unfortunate death of Mike Mulligan, sir. He was a man at the canning works. I guess I hardly knew him by name. P'r'aps you know, Mr. Sholmes, suthing of the working of an American beef factory. The machines,

sir, go on night and day. The steers are driven in one gate, and at another they come out in the form of

Squawk's potted beef. Stopping the machinery means the loss of a heap of dollars, and a foreman who stopped for a minute, sir, would be fired before he could say 'No sugar in mine!' It sometimes happens, unfortunately, that a man falls into the machines and gets mixed up with the beef. Of course, it's unfortunate. But sich things, sir, can't be helped in a hustling town like Chicawgo. It doesn't happen often — not mor'n once in a week, I guess. Such a man, sir, disappears from human knowledge. When he comes out of the machinery, he comes out along with the beef, and is exported in tins to all parts of the world. One bit of him may go to England, another bit to Russia, another bit to South America — it depends on the tins he's potted in."

Herlock Sholmes nodded.

"Well, sir," resumed the millionaire, "men have disappeared that way and nothing has happened, till it



happened about Mike Mulligan. He got tipsy and pitched in, and vanished from the airth. His brother, sir, came to see me to have the machines stopped. Stopped, you know — a loss of p'r'aps five hundred dollars! It couldn't be did! Besides, by the time we'd got 'em stopped, Mike Mulligan would have been turned into canned beef, and it would have been a sheer waste of time. But, for some reason, Paddy Mulligan was wild, and he left the works swearing revenge."

The millionaire mopped his perspiring brow.

"Waal, Sir, now I come to the pint. This man, Paddy Mulligan, took it to heart. He wrote threatening letters, making the most unreasonable demands. He wanted the body of his brother Mike for burial, sir. Now, I put it to you, Mr. Sholmes, as a reasonable man, what could I do? If I had opened all the tins in the factory, what was left of Mike wouldn't have been recognisable. Besides, he was already exported. At that time we were working at pressure on contracts for London, and, while Paddy Mulligan was bothering me, his brother had already been distributed in fragments all over the Yewnited Kingdom. His own relations in Ireland, sir, may have received him, in parts, without knowing it."

"Certainly it would have been a very difficult task to collect him," Sholmes remarked.

"The only way to satisfy Paddy Mulligan, sir, would have been to hand him the whole week's output of the factory—beef and Mike and all —

and let him bury it," said Mr. Squawk, "and you can bet your bottom dollar, sir, that I wasn't doing that. Besides, as I've said, Mike had already been exported. Since that date, Mr. Sholmes, Squawk's potted beef has achieved a worldwide reputation. Its peculiar flavor, sir, has recommended it far and wide, especially in the South Sea Islands. But, while I have piled up mountains of dollars, sir, I've been haunted by that guy's threats of revenge. Paddy Mulligan is still demanding his brother's body for burial, and threatening revenge if he doesn't get it. I confess, sir, that I came to this benighted island chiefly to get away from Paddy Mulligan. But he has followed me here, and I live in terror, sir, night and day, of having my brains knocked out with his shillelagh."

The millionaire paused, in great agitation.

"It's a regular cinch for him," he explained. "I guess I can't always dodge him. Mr. Sholmes, I want you to nail the hoodlum."

Herlock Sholmes looked thoughtful.

"You want this man captured?"

"Yep."

"And then?"

"Put where he can't do any harm!" said Mr. Squawk.

"But so far he has only written threatening letters," said Herlock Sholmes thoughtfully. "For that, he could only be given a term of

imprisonment. When he came out, he would be as dangerous as ever."

"More dangerous, perhaps," I ventured to remark.

Mr. Squawk gave a groan.

"I reckon that's so," he said. "I guess I'm up against it. I want him nailed and kept safe somehow. Mr. Sholmes, give me your advice for making that man safe, and name your own figure."

"I am entirely at your service, Mr. Squawk. Fortunately, I am able to suggest a plan which would be thoroughly efficacious, if you carry out my instructions to the minutest detail."

"Go ahead, sir."

"So far, this man has threatened your death, and for that he could be imprisoned, but he would be subsequently released, when he would doubtless carry out his threat at once. The best thing you can do, Mr. Squawk, is to encounter him personally——"

"Eh?"

"He will then, doubtless, knock out your brains with his shillelagh as you have remarked."

"Wha-a-at?"

"And for that," explained Herlock Sholmes, "he can be hanged. He will then be safe from doing further harm."

I could not help giving my amazing friend a glance of admiration at this simple and the same time subtle suggestion.

The millionaire, however, did not appear to be satisfied.

Such a method of disposing of a dangerous character appeared to be admirable in its simplicity, and certainly would have been thought of by no one but Herlock Sholmes.

"Excellent!" I could not help exclaiming.

"Jerusalem crickets!" exclaimed Mr. Squawk. "I guess that cuts no ice with me, Mr. Sholmes. I calculate I'm not taking any."

Sholmes stiffened perceptibly.

"If you decline to follow my directions, Mr. Squawk, I can only decline to take up the case." he said. "I always insist upon my clients placing themselves unreservedly in my hands."

Mr. Squawk rose, and, after making several uncalled-for remarks of a personal character, quitted the room, closing the door behind him with a bang.

Herlock Sholmes elevated his eyebrows.

"A very peculiar client, Jotson," he remarked. "I can do nothing in this case, but I fear that he will have reason to repent of his obstinacy. By the way, Jotson, you might mention to Mrs. Spudson that under no circumstances whatever is she to make any use of American canned beef in our cuisine. It would be distinctly unpleasant to be served with any portion of the unfortunate Mike Mulligan which may still be in existence."

## Chapter 2

I have not recorded this interesting case as one of the triumphs of Herlock Sholmes, but rather as an example of the disastrous results which followed in the rare instances where his professional advice was disregarded by a client.

Such instances were very rare, and in every case Sholmes was justified by the results.

We did not see Mr. Squawk again. I hoped that, for his own sake, he would return and place himself in the hands of my amazing friend for guidance.

But he was a man of obstinate character, extremely self-willed and pertinacious.

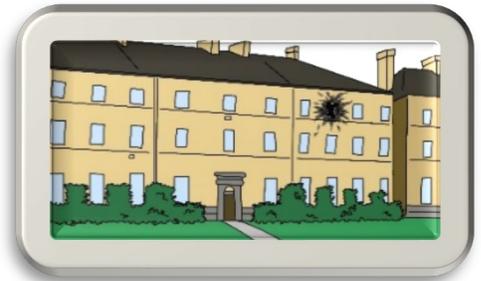
We heard later that he gone to the police for protection, and naturally, we were not surprised to hear that the result was what might have been foreseen.

The shillelagh of the revengeful Paddy Mulligan claimed his victim, and the man then disappeared without leaving a trace behind him — as completely as if he had fallen into the machines in the canning works at Chicago.

THE END

# Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason



BAKER STREET ELEMENTARY  
NUMBER 335 - 05/09/2021

FAY, MASON & MASON

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF MY ART PROJECT, MA'AM ?

IT'S DIFFERENT...

Three cartoon characters, two boys and one girl, are sitting at a table, looking at a piece of paper. The girl on the right is speaking.

THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF HOLMES AND WATSON

DEFINE DIFFERENT...

IT HAS A LOT OF IMAGINATION AND ENERGY.

Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at a piece of paper. The girl on the right is speaking.

DOES SHE EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS ?

SHOULD I TELL HER I DROPPED MY PAINT PALETTE ON THE PAPER, AND SHE'S LOOKING AT THE RESULT ?

Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at a piece of paper. The boy in the middle is speaking.

THINK SHE'LL HANG IT ON THE WALL IN THE HALLWAY ?

ONLY IF THEY RENAME IT THE 'HALL OF SHAME'.

Three cartoon characters are sitting at a table, looking at a piece of paper. The boy in the middle is speaking.

Copyright 2021, Fay, Mason, Mason