

Baker Street Elementary
& The Victorian Web

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



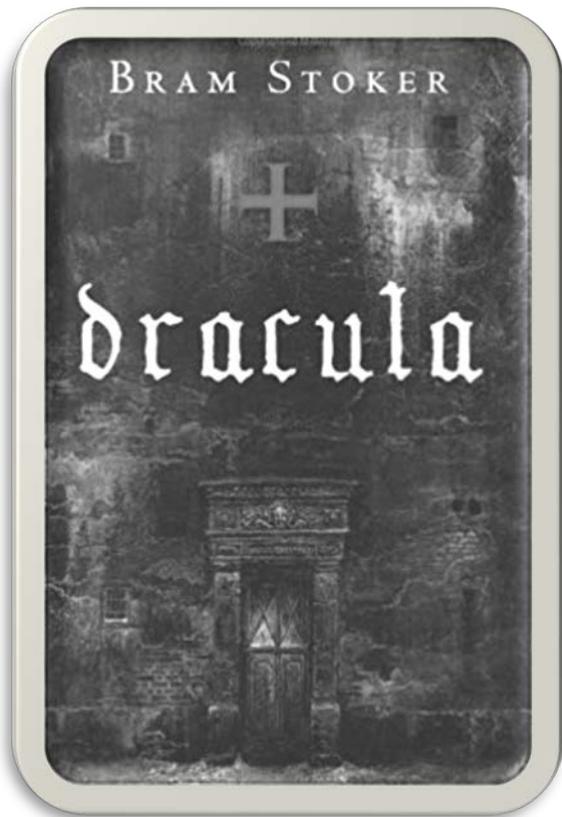
Baker Street Elementary
& The Victorian Web

The Life and Times in Victorian London
57 - 9 Stories to Sink Your Teeth Into-- 07/30/2018



Welcome to topic number 57... In "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire," "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client," and "The Adventure of the Three Gables," we investigate 3 different vampire-like creatures.

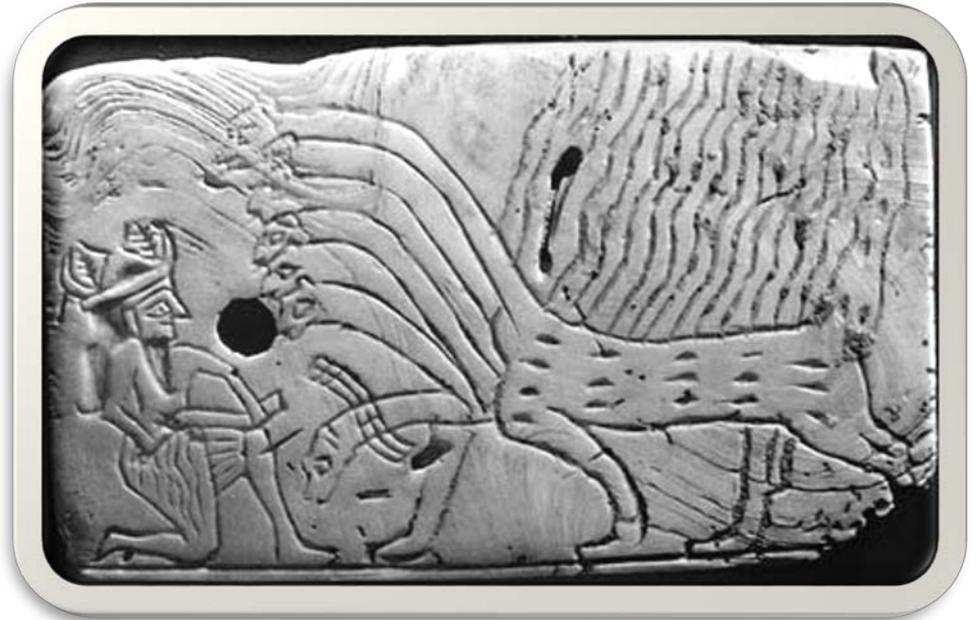




These three stories, all first published between 1924 and 1926, include references to beings who survive off the essence of others and appeared in print about twenty-five years after Bram Stoker's Dracula.



The concept of the vampire — an individual who achieves immortality by living off of others' blood or energy — can be traced back to ancient civilizations and appears in some form in most cultures.



The basic characteristics include an eternal life sustained through "feasting" on others, which have included babies, young girls, humans in general, or sometimes animals.



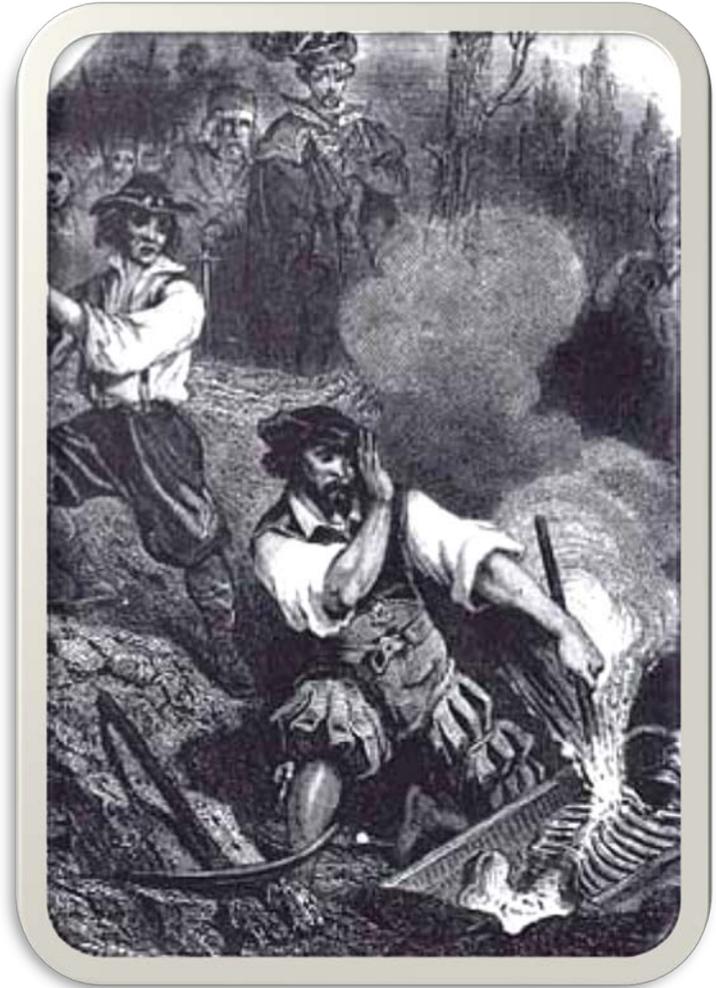
Theories suggest these legends were used to explain epidemics that wiped out whole families or villages (such as the plague or tuberculosis), disfiguration of corpses as part of decomposition...



...and fear of particularly evil or hated figures after death ("sightings" of the individual occurring in dreams or on the street).



Such creatures were dealt with by exhuming the body, disarming it with a stake through the heart or stone in the mouth, or at times, burning the corpse.



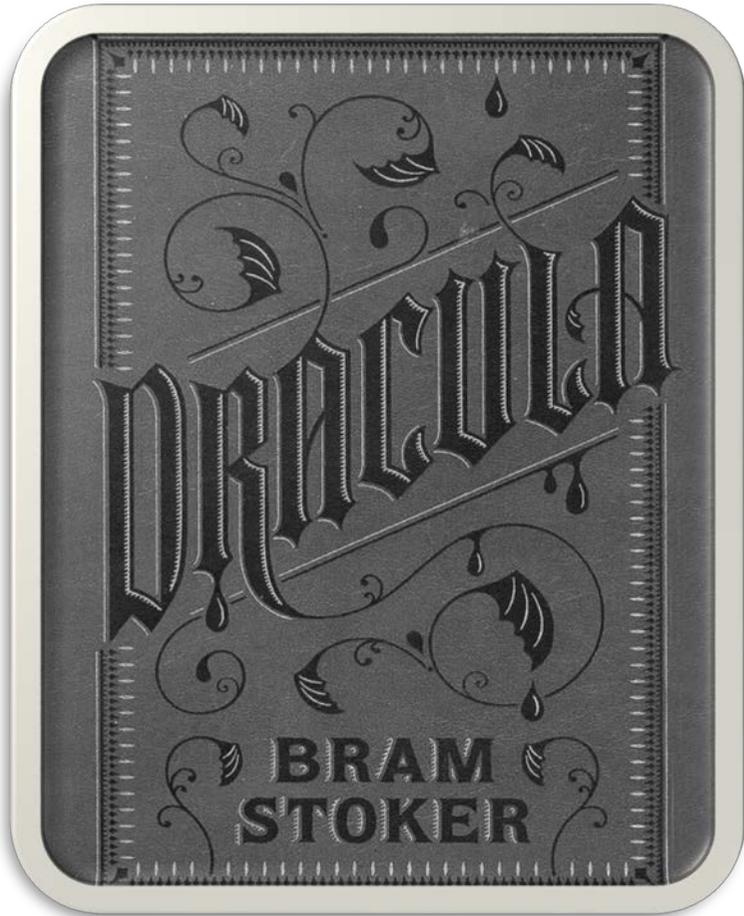
A renewal of "vampire craze" developed in the early 1700s with the publication of several tales of dead or spurned lovers returning to drink the blood of their former object of affection...



...and often served as morality tales describing the tensions between heathens and Christians.



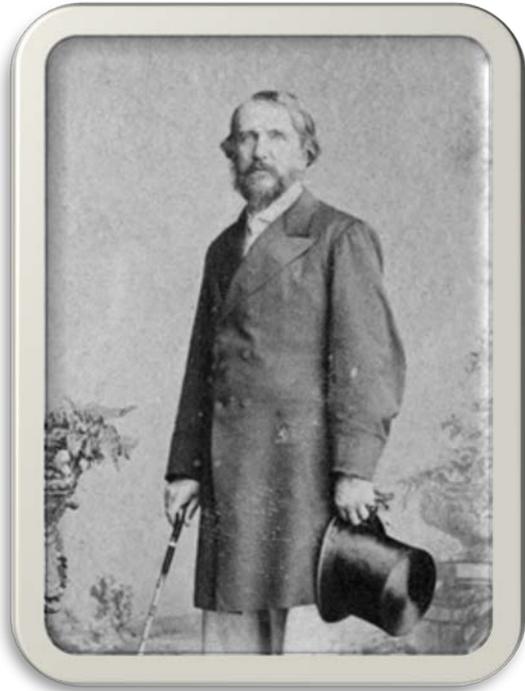
The standard for contemporary vampire lore, however, was set with the publication of Dracula.



This story followed the elements of gothic fiction popular at the time, combining a remote location with an ominous setting (such as a decaying house), and a supernatural creature.



*Of the many themes in the book,
the incursion of foreign elements—in
particular monsters—into Britain...*

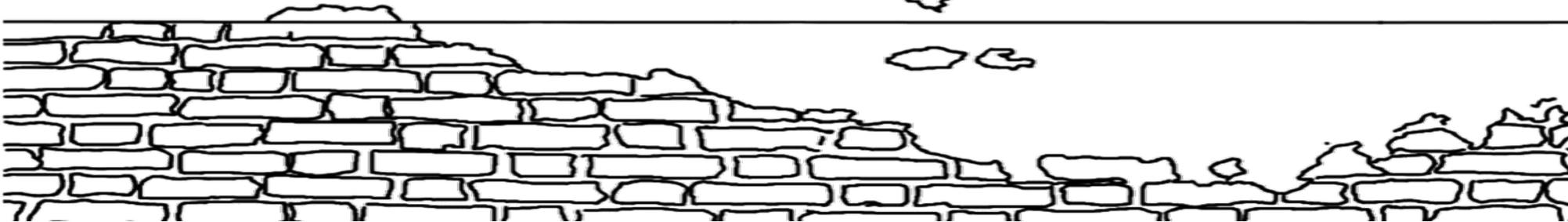
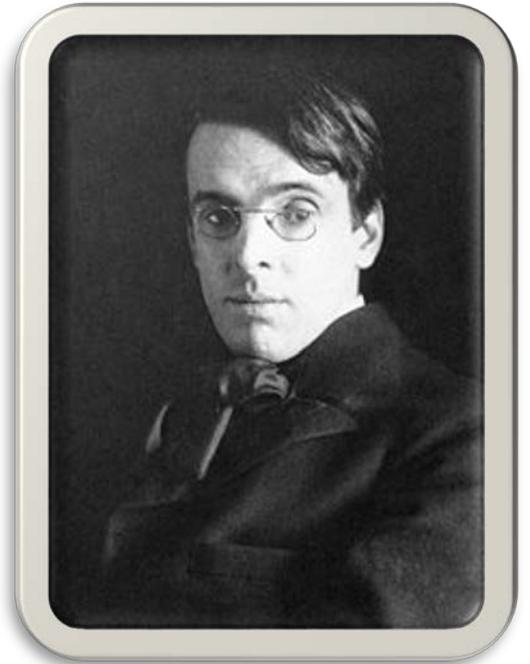




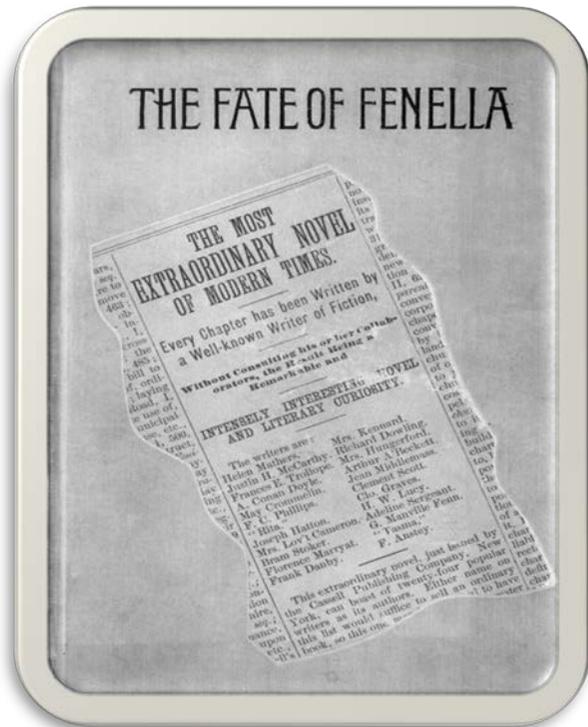
...was shared with other authors of the time, including Rudyard Kipling and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.



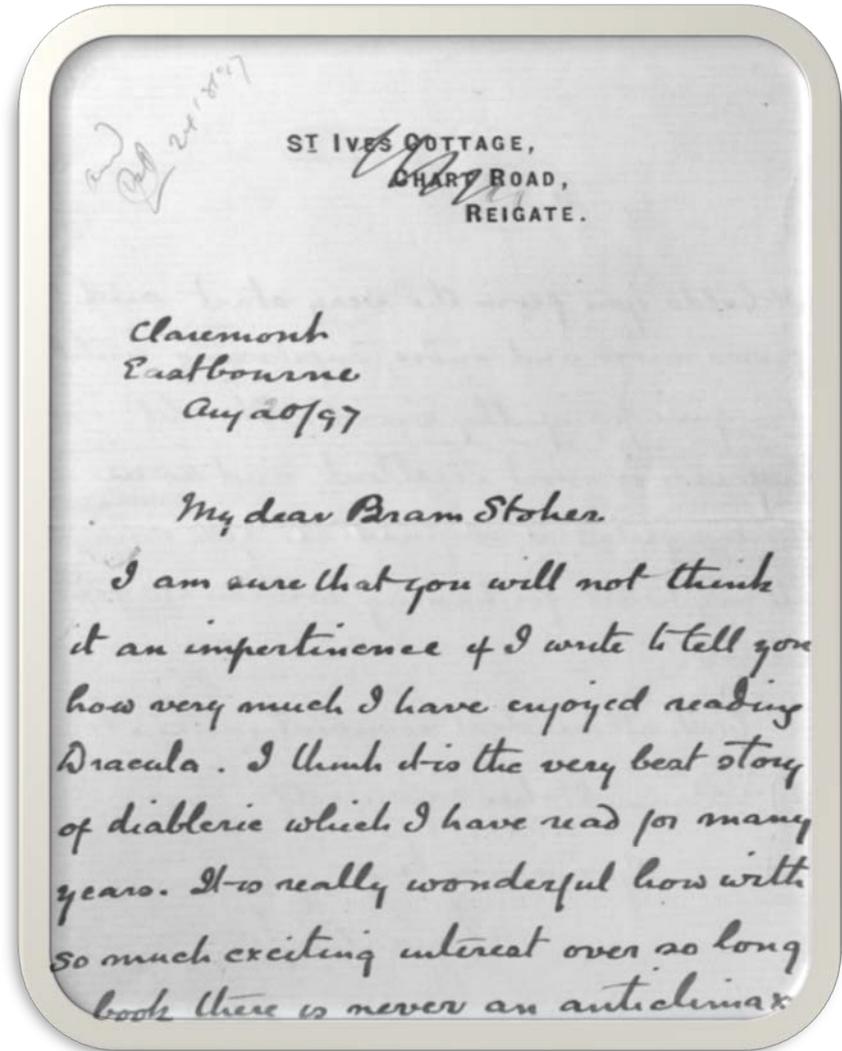
That Stoker and Conan Doyle shared similar ideas is not surprising in that they traveled in the same literary circles, which also involved authors such as Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats.



This group even collaborated in a serial novel *The Fate of Fenella*, published in 1892.



Their friendship was also shared through mutual admiration of each other's works as seen in the letter Doyle wrote to Stoker in 1897, praising Dracula and Stoker's interview of Conan Doyle published in 1907.



Some critics have gone so far to suggest the three stories in the canon pay tribute to Stoker in various ways.



"The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire" references Transylvania and aspects of vampire lore as presented by Stoker.



The "Adventure of the Illustrious Client" contains numerous names, places and events that hint back to Stoker's work.



"The Adventure of the Three Gables" describes the villainess, Isadora Klein, as a woman who retains youth, beauty, and finances at the expense of her lovers who sicken and die—a fate similar to Dracula's female victims.



In six vampire-like stories Sir Arthur Conan Doyle penned before Dracula, a variety of villains feed off others' essence, including a giant Venus flytrap ("The American's Tale")...



THE AMERICAN'S TALE.

"It is strange, it is," he was saying as I opened the door of the room where our social life semi-Blancety society met; "but I could tell you queer things about that 'un—slightly queer things. You can't learn everything out of books, sir, either. You see it ain't the same as an strong English together and so has had good oblations as feeds themselves in the queer places I've been in. They're mostly rough men, sir, as can scarce speak right, far less tell with pen and ink the things they've seen; but if they could they'd make some of your European's bar one with astonishment. They would, sir, you bet."

His name was Jefferson Adams, I believe; I know his initials were J. A., for you may see them yet deeply whittled on the right-hand upper panel of our smoking-room door. He left us this legacy, and also some artistic patterns done in tobacco-pipes upon our Turkey carpet, but beyond these reminiscences our American storyteller has vanished from our ken. He glanced across our solitary quiet conviviality like some brilliant meteor, and then was lost in the outer darkness. That night, however, our Nevada friend was in full swing; and I quaffed in my pipe and dropped into the nearest chair, anxious not to interrupt his story.

"Mind you," he continued, "I haven't got no grudge against your men of science. I like and respect a chap as can match every best and plant, from a blackberry to a gnat with a jaw-breaking name; but if you want real interesting facts, something a bit juicy, you go to your whistles and your footstools, and your seats and Hudson Bay men, chaps who surely can scarce sign their names."

There was a pause here, as Mr. Jefferson Adams produced a long chiselled and lit it. We presented a strict silence in the room, for we had already learned that on the slightest interruption our Yankee drew himself into his shell again. He glanced round with a self-satisfied smile as he remarked our expectant looks, and continued through a halo of smoke,

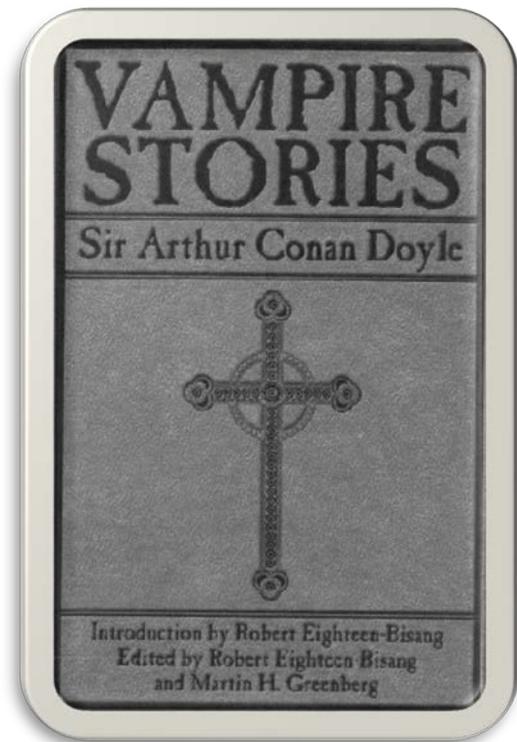
"Now think of your gentleman has ever been in Arizona? None, I'll warrant. And of all English or Americans as can put pen to paper, how many has been in Arizona? Previous few, I calculate. I've been there, sir, lived there for years; and when I think of what I've seen there, why, I can scarce get myself to believe it now."

"Ah, there's a country! I was one of Walker's Eldons, as they chose to call us; and after we'd busted up, and the chief was shot, some of us made tracks and found our way down there. A regular English and American colony, we was, with ourselves and children, and all complete. I notice some of the old folk there yet, and that they ain't forgotten what I'm a-going to tell you. No, I warrant they ain't, never on this side of the grass, sir."

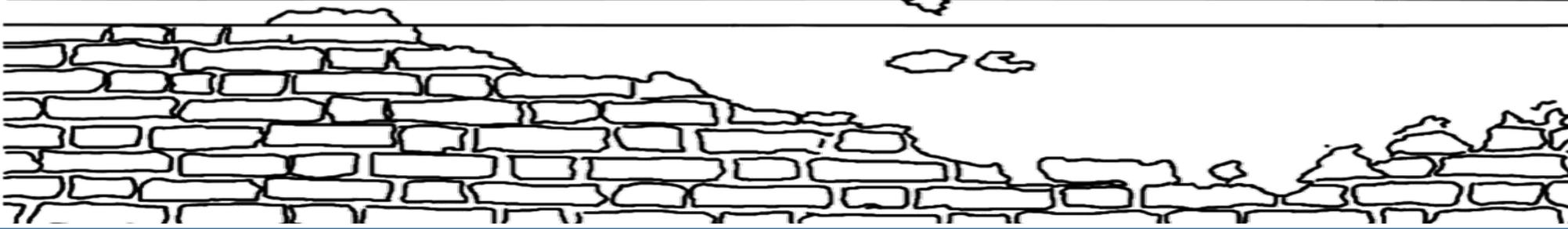
"I was talking about the country, though; and I guess I could astonish you considerably if I spoke of nothing else. To think of such a land being built for a few 'Germans' and half-breeds! It's a misnomer of the gifts of Providence, that's what I call it. Guess as long over a chap's head as he rode through it, and then so quick that you couldn't



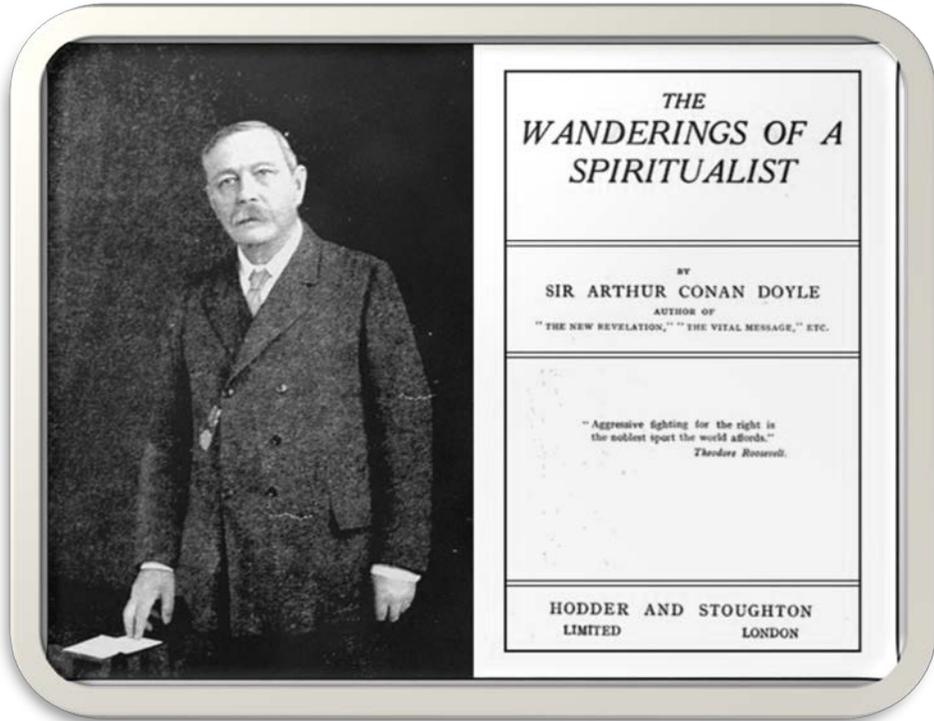
...a specter that lures a ship captain onto an ice floe to feast on his energy ("The Captain of the Pole-Star"), three villains with powers to control others and extract their spirit ("John Barrington Cowles," "The Winning Shot," and "The Parasite")...

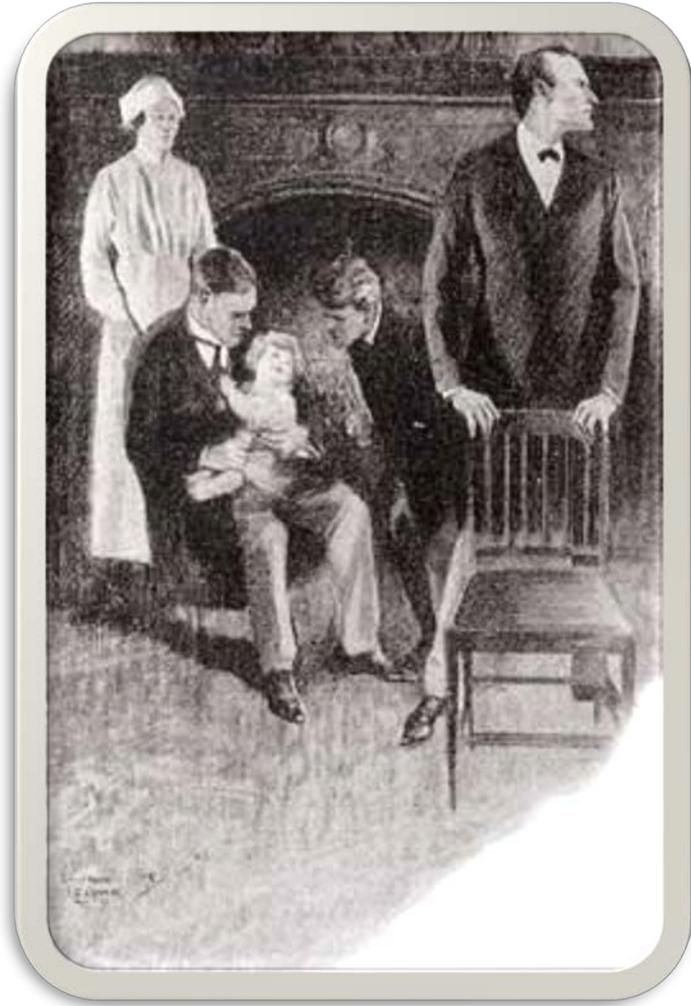


...and an Egyptian who achieved immortality, only to spend his days seeking a way to end it ("The Ring of Toth").



These nine stories serve as further indication of Conan Doyle's interest in spiritualism and the supernatural and his departure from the attitude and beliefs expressed by his own creation.



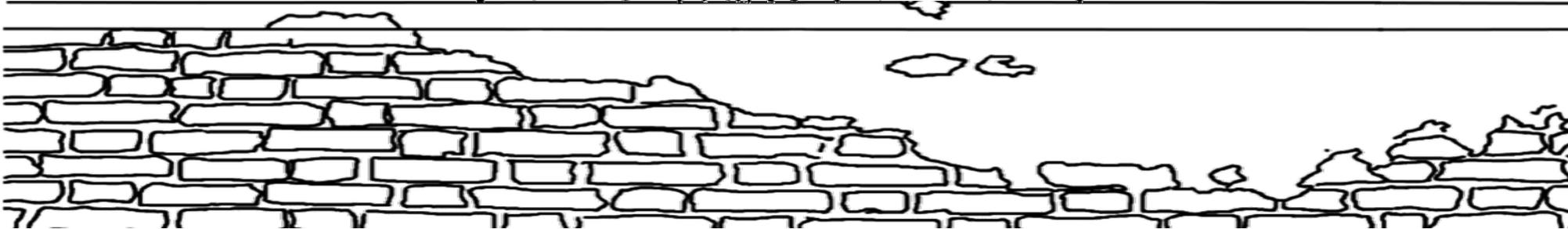


For myself, tales of beings who drain others for their own survival are "rubbish."



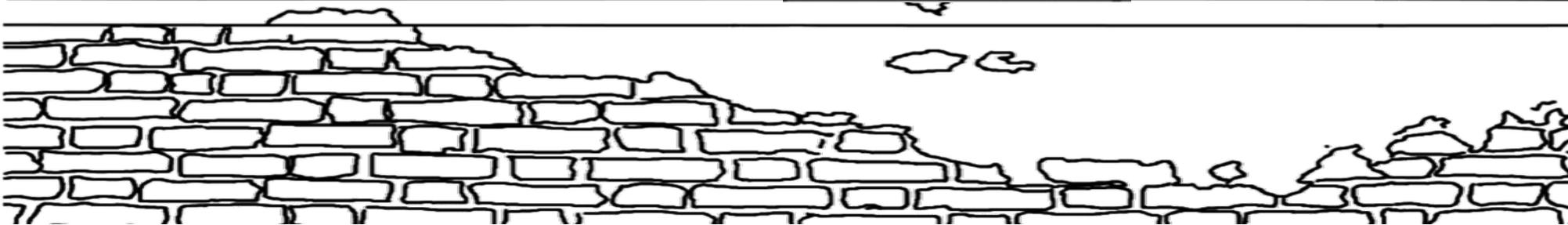


Despite Doyle's own preferences, in my mind and world, "no ghosts need apply."



*So we have completed
topic 57 in our series...*

*Yes, but we'll be back
with another topic
soon...*



Original Source Material for this topic:

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- 4) Shmoop Editorial Team. "Dracula." Shmoop. Shmoop University, Inc., 11 Nov. 2008. Web. 11 Sep. 2017.
- 5) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/authors/10-facts-about-Bram-Stoker/>
- 6) https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php?title=Bram_Stoker
- 7) Eighteen-Bisang, Robert and Martin Greenberg, editors. Vampire Stories. Skyhorse Publishing, 2009, page 218.
- 8) Ibid, pages 198-199
- 9) Ibid, page 239.
- 10) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Kindle Location 29399).



Baker Street Elementary

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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GEORGE P. LANDOW

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WE ARE EXTREMELY

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