

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 10, No. 08 – August, 2022

*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star – founded November, 1970*



PLEASE NOTE: September 04, Meeting NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on September 04 at 1:00 pm central. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is "The Adventure of the Dancing Men".

Bob Katz, BSI, ASH, will lead the discussion on the story of "The Adventure of the Dancing Men".

Russell Merritt, BSI, ASH, will be our featured guest speaker, and will speak on "Sir Arthur's Excellent Adventure in Istanbul: Holmes, Submarines, Satire, and the Red Sultan."

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

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AUGUST 07 SUMMARY

Cindy Brown

There were 56 in attendance at this ZOOM meeting.

The meeting was opened with a toast to Mrs. McFarland, the mother of John Hector McFarland, given by Cindy Brown (see page 4).

Next, we had our quiz on the story, "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder".

The 6th in the series of books published by the Crew of the Barque Lone Star is in the works. The title will be "The Rest of the Story". Submissions will be accepted thru August 31, 2022 (see page 5).

Bob Katz, BSI, ASH, then led a wonderful discussion on "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder".

Sandy Kozinn, then gave us a limerick based on "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder" (see page 6).

Russell Merritt led a discussion about possibly placing books in prisons and youth detention centers. He mentioned two websites that he has found which might be of help to the Beacon Society if we are able to pursue that path. One is Inside Books Project, and the other is Prison Literature Project.

Dan Andriacco was our keynote speaker for the meeting, and he spoke on "My Mysterious World, how I write mysteries, and how they are affected by my lifelong love of Sherlock Holmes". Dan's book, "No Police Like Holmes" is now available for free on Kindle.

The Dallas conference, Lone Star Holmes: The Past, Present, and Future, is scheduled for May 26-28, 2023.

Our lightning quiz was a four-minute quiz attempting to name 15 people in the canon named Colonel.

We then closed the meeting with the poem written by Rich Krisciunas, dedicated to The Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

Next month the story will be "The Adventure of the Dancing Men", and the featured speaker will be **Russell Merritt, BSI, ASH**. The title of his talk is... "Sir Arthur's Excellent Adventure in Istanbul: Holmes, Submarines, Satire, and the Red Sultan."

As always, thanks so much to Cindy Brown for keeping the notes of the meeting.

A TOAST TO THE NORWOOD BUILDER

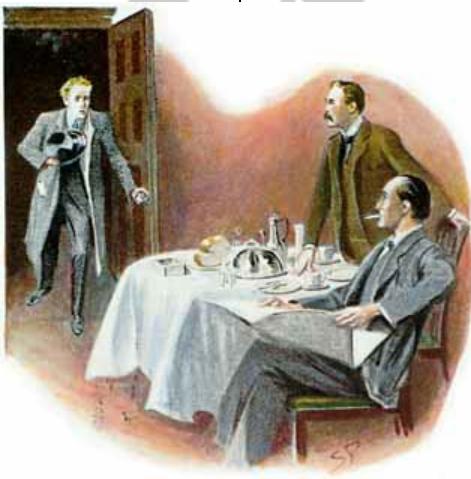
Cynthia Brown

In the Norwood Builder, London has become a singularly uninteresting city since the death of the late lamented Professor Moriarty.

Holmes uses his amazing skills of observation by telling young Mr. McFarland, I see that beyond obvious facts that you are a bachelor, a solicitor, a Freemason, and an asthmatic, I know nothing whatever about you.'

I love the character of John Hector McFarland, for his innocent demeanor, his forthright attitude, for he didn't run, or try to hide from the police, but went straight to the one person he thought might be able to help him. All this was an exhibit of just how he was brought up. To be honest... in his business dealings and in his life.

I even liked the character of Mr. Jonas Oldacre. For this was a scoundrel of the first degree. Willing to see a young man, whom he really didn't even personally know, but would still be willing to see him hang for a crime that he didn't commit. Which wasn't actually a crime at all. Yes, Jonas Oldacre, was a pretty considerable blackguard as Holmes described him. His business was in trouble, he had no friends, and had already established himself with a new identity and



a new bank account, in another town. Now this is a character that Conan Doyle was having fun with. Someone I truly loved to hate. I was amazed upon my first reading of this story, that Oldacre had actually gone to the trouble to design a room specifically with "hiding" in mind. I mean how long had he been plotting this little "incident of revenge". All this fits together for me, except the Will that he drafted on the train. This seemed almost like an afterthought because it was so haphazardly drawn up as to be nearly illegible." It seemed like the Will was such an integral part of the plot, that I would have expected old Oldacre to give it a little more attention. But maybe he was exhausted after the building of the secret room. And what about that creepy housekeeper. I just had to say that, because she definitely was!

But my favorite character in this story was none other than Mrs. McFarland, a little fluffy blue-eyed person, who obviously loved her son very much. And her husband whom we did not meet directly, but was a better if poorer man, than Jonas Oldacre. Every once in a while, Conan Doyle lets us view through the cracks in his story telling veneer, to what might very well have been his own personal life. We know he had a great love

and respect for his own mother who did everything within her power to see that her son was given the opportunities to not just survive but to thrive in his adult life.

"I was engaged to him, Mr Holmes, when I heard a shocking story of how he had turned a cat loose in an aviary, and I was so horrified at his brutal cruelty that I would have nothing more to do with him." She rummaged in a bureau, and presently she produced a photograph of a woman, shamefully defaced and mutilated with a knife.
"That is my own photograph," said she. "He sent it to me in that state, with his curse, upon my wedding morning." Wow, that's a lot of hate for Jonas Oldacre to unload on a bride on her wedding day of all times. I've heard of people sending sympathy cards to the new bride or groom because of their choice of a mate, but never a hate picture with the face disfigured. Scary!!!

Holmes is certainly pleased to hear McFarlane may be pursued by the police: "'Arrest you!' he remarks. "This is really most grati--most interesting." Is it the pressure of having to save an innocent man that excites Holmes about this case? Or is it the chance to compete with Scotland Yard again? Could there have been yet another

reason for Holmes's excitement over that one bit of information? All good reasons to continue to read Sherlock Holmes stories on and on.



According to Sonia Fetherston, "A mysterious bequest. A secret room. A creepy housekeeper. The Case of the Norwood Builder is very nearly gothic."

We toast Mrs. Mc Farland, for keeping the picture all these years. Maybe she kept it as a reminder of just how awful he was. Sort of a reminder maybe, when things weren't so good at home, and she wondered if she made the right choice in a life mate, reminding herself that Oldacre was truly evil. She just couldn't imagine how evil he could actually be. She saved the picture, and she saved her son.

And even a nod to old Oldacre because he was not what he appeared to be on the surface. He was supposedly a successful builder and kept to himself, but all these years he had harbored evil thoughts because he was thwarted in love. Now that's a scary sort of person to be tangled up with.

Please join me in a toast to the fluffy blue-eyed Mrs. McFarland.

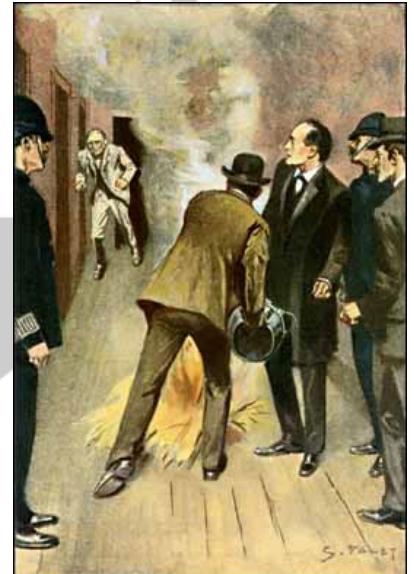
NORWOOD BUILDER

Sandy Kozinn

McFarlane's situation was dire
Until Holmes fixed it all with a fire.

Revenge for the past
Had burgeoned at last.

It seemed the old man was a liar.



The Crew of the Barque Lone Star Society is producing our 6th book as part of our 51st Anniversary



For 2022, we will be putting together entitled *The Canon: The Rest of the Story*

Members may submit an essay or pastiche which “continues” or “fills in the blanks” of one of the 60 stories. In other words, what happened after Watson stopped writing, or were items to the story that Watson accidentally or deliberately left out.

- Your pastiche / essay should be 3,000-5,000 words. Obviously, a shorter piece is fine.
- Your pastiche / essay will be edited by one or two editors, but only for grammar, typos, etc... we will not edit the content of your piece.
- This project is not limited to those members in the DFW area. Any member is welcome to submit a piece.
- We plan to finalize the compilation by the end of the calendar year, so we ask members to submit their entry by August 31.
- As in previous years, all submitters will receive a complimentary copy of the book as our thanks.



A NOT-SO-GENTLEMANLY GAME OF CARDS

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, Lone Star Deck-Mate

The card game whist lay behind two deaths in the Canon: Ronald Adair's in "The Adventure of the Empty House" and Brenda Tregennis' in "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot." Colonel Sebastian Moran shot Adair when he confronted him about cheating at the card game, and Brenda Tregennis died while playing the game after inhaling fumes from a poisonous root. Despite such deadly consequences, whist was the most popular card game among Victorian elite.

Card playing has a long history, with the first recorded in China around 800 CE, and gambling even longer (more than 4000 years ago). (1)

Whist's lifespan, on the other hand, was rather short, spanning a period between the 1700s to the 1900s when it was superseded by bridge. (2) Originally a game for common men, whist gained in popularity when gentlemen took it up for amusement at coffee houses and carried it into their clubs.

The game became associated with strategy and mental skills and, thus, appropriate for the upper classes. (3) To play, and win,

required "a good memory, sympathetic partnering, and psychological acumen."

Players also developed strategies to cheat despite Edward Hoyle's (the first to set down the rules for the game) condemnation of such actions. (4)

Similar to bridge or spades, whist involved two teams attempting to collect "tricks."

The game involved a standard 52-card deck (with ace being the highest card).

Teams were determined by cutting the cards, with the two selecting the highest cards and the other two becoming partners. The cards were shuffled and distributed to each player, with the last card left face up on the table during the first trick (and then returned to the dealer's hand).



This card determined the "trump suit" for the game. A card from the trump suit won the trick, regardless of any other card played. The player to the dealer's left, began play by setting down a card.

The others played a card in the same suit unless they didn't have one. The trick was taken by the highest card, and play continued

until all thirteen tricks had been collected. (5) The team with the most tricks after the round won and was awarded a point for all tricks taken after the first six (called "making book").

Additional points could be won by collecting either three (for two points) or four (four points) of the "honours" (ace, king, queen, and jack in the trump suit). The first team to accumulate ten points (in standard whist) or five (in short whist) won the game. In a "rubber of whist," the winning team was determined by the best of three games. (6)

For the aristocracy, betting on whist games was considered appropriate because it required strategy instead of those depending on chance (provided by dice) preferred by the lower classes.

The elite's participation in such games meant the stakes in whist could be high. Bets as great as £100,000—such as those by the Duke of Wellington—were the stuff of legend, (7) and contemporary literature included many morality tales of young aristocrats meeting their ruin from such excesses. (8)

This sort of extravagant gambling was viewed as threatening the country's whole social fabric. The aristocracy's wealth and hierarchy were based on land ownership and the size of one's holdings.

Gambling losses paid by land transfers could lead to shifts in both property lines and status

within the nobility and, thus, endangered the social structure of those in power. (9)

Given such stakes, cheating became a fixture within the clubs. Despite Hoyle's treatise and rules to the contrary, a variety of techniques were available for players to "gain the upper hand."

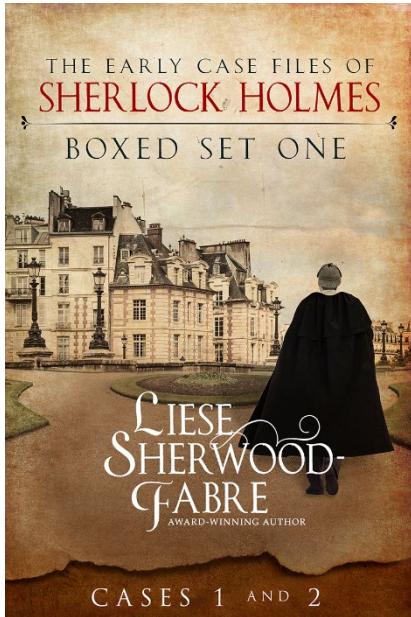


Secret signals, such as a kick under the table, might be passed to one's partner, or through codes disguised as comments during play, such as exclaiming "My dear sir," or including a certain word like "truly" to indicate a particular suit.

Signals using an object, for example a handkerchief, or using a certain number of fingers when playing a card, could inform a partner of a good hand or the number of trump cards possessed. Finally, if skilled in the art of shuffling and dealing, the cheater could control which cards were dealt to him and his partner. (10)

According to Watson, Ronald Adair's own card playing was both honorable and modest. His losses or winnings were well within his income, despite being a member of several clubs and playing almost every day—until he was paired with Colonel Moran and won much more than his usual five pounds.

While the technique Moran used to win at the Bagatelle Card Club was not specified, Ronald Adair was clever enough to spot it and paid with his life.



Liese Sherwood-Fabre's first two cases of young Sherlock Holmes are now available as an eBook boxed set and can be read through Amazon's Kindle Unlimited program or for a lower combined price than the single books. This set can be found here:
<https://www.amazon.com/Early-Files-Sherlock-Holmes-Cases-ebook/dp/B0B3Y6TVX3>

- 1) <https://www.gambling.net/history/>
- 2) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/whist>
- 3) <https://londonhistorians.wordpress.com/2014/06/05/gambling-in-londons-most-ruinous-gentlemens-clubs/>
- 4) <https://regency-explorer.net/whist/>
- 5) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/whist>
- 6) <https://www.kristenkoster.com/a-regency-primer-on-how-to-play-whist/>
- 7) <https://londonhistorians.wordpress.com/2014/06/05/gambling-in-londons-most-ruinous-gentlemens-clubs/>
- 8) <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/25690>
- 9) <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/678621/pdf>
- 10) <https://regency-explorer.net/whist/>

Canonical Similes

Karen Murdock

Published in *The Petrel Flyer*, (Vancouver, British Columbia), Volume 16, no. 3, (May/June 2004)

1. "As to the Admiralty—it is buzzing like an overturned bee hive."
 - a. Who is the speaker
 - b. Which tale?
2. "Well, sir, said she in a voice like the wind from an iceberg.
 - a. Who is the speaker?
 - b. Which tale?
3. the caps of the great mountains lit up one after the other, like lamps at a festival
 - a. Which tale?
 - b. Which mountain range?
4. The sight of it was to me like a fire in a snowstorm
 - a. Who or what is being described?
 - b. Which tale?
5. Folk who were in grief came to my wife like birds to a light-house
 - a. Who is in grief?
 - b. Which tale?
6. his face was all crinkled and puckered like a withered apple
 - a. Who is being described?
 - b. Which tale?
7. "that ghastly face glimmering as white as cheese"
 - a. Whose face is being described?
 - b. Which tale?
8. "He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web"
 - a. Who sits motionless?
 - b. Which tale?
9. the breath of the passers-by blew out into smoke like so many pistol shots
Which tale does this description occur in?
10. we saw a gigantic column of smoke [...] like an immense ostrich feather
Which tale does this description occur in?
11. "You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut."
 - a. Who makes this observation?
 - b. Who is being described?
 - c. Which tale?
12. the lady herself loomed behind his small black figure like a full-sailed merchant-man behind a tiny pilot boat
 - a. Who is being described here?
 - b. Which tale?
13. putting out a broad, fat hand like the flipper of a seal
 - a. Whose hand?
 - b. Which tale?
14. [his voice] boomed out like a dinner-gong
 - a. Whose voice boomed out?
 - b. Which tale?

15. [a certain character's] native accent rattled like a stick upon railings
- Whose accent is being described?
 - What city and country is this person native to?
 - Which tale?
16. the man must have gone down like a poleaxed ox
- Which man?
 - Which tale?
17. his grey whiskers bristled like those of an angry cat
- Whose whiskers?
 - Which tale?
18. a round, dark object was fixed like a plum in a pudding
- What is the object?
 - Which tale?
19. a bright, quick face, freckled like a plover's egg
- a. Whose face?
b. Which tale?
c. What is a plover?
20. "See how that one little cloud floats like a pink feather from some gigantic flamingo"
- Who is the speaker?
 - Which tale?
21. the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney.
Which tale does this simile appear in?
22. they scampered away downstairs like so many rats
- Who scampered?
 - Which tale?

This quiz was prepared by Karen Murdock and inflicted upon The Norwegian Explorers at their "BSI West Dinner" on January 6, 2004 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. There are 44 possible correct answers. However, the quiz is so fiendishly difficult that any score over 10 is considered excellent.

KEY: QUIZ, Canonical Similes

- a. Mycroft Holmes b. "The Bruce-Partington Plans" (Doubleday, 916)
- a. Violet de Merville b. "The Illustrious Client" (Doubleday 991)
- a. A Study in Scarlet (Doubleday 71) b. not named in this passage, but has to be the Wasatch Range in Utah (The geography of the American West, as described in STUD, is highly fanciful)
- a. Jack Prendergast b. "The Gloria Scott" (Doubleday 381)
- a. Kate Whitney b. "The Man With the Twisted Lip" (Doubleday 230)
- a. Henry Wood b. "The Crooked Man" (Doubleday 418)
- a. Godfrey Emsworth b. "The Blanched Soldier" (Doubleday 1004)
- a. Professor Moriarty b. "The Final Problem" (Doubleday 471)
- "The Blue Carbuncle" (Doubleday 251)
- "The Engineer's Thumb" (Doubleday 285)
- a. Young Stamford b. Doctor Watson (recently returned from Afghanistan) c. A Study in Scarlet (Doubleday 16)
- a. Miss Mary Sutherland b. "A Case of Identity" (Doubleday 192)

13. a. Mycroft Holmes b. "The Greek Interpreter" (Doubleday 436)
14. a. The Duke of Holderness b. "The Priory School" (Doubleday 544)
15. a. Inspector Alec MacDonald b. Aberdeen, Scotland c. The Valley of Fear (Doubleday 798)
16. a. Black Gorgiano b. "The Red Circle" (Doubleday 909)
17. a. Old Frankland b. The Hound of the Baskervilles (Doubleday 737)
18. a. The Black Pearl of the Borgias b. "The Six Napoleons" (Doubleday 594)
19. a. Violet Hunter b. "The Copper Beeches" (Doubleday 318) c. A plover is a wading bird of the family Charadriidae. Any mention of "bird" constitutes a correct answer. Contestants deserve a correct answer about this point in the quiz. (As long as you didn't think it was a snake or a dinosaur . . .)
20. a. Sherlock Holmes, believe it or not—in a rare lyrical mood b. The Sign of the Four (Doubleday 121)
21. "The Five Orange Pips" (Doubleday 218)
22. a. The Baker Street Irregulars b. A Study in Scarlet (Doubleday 42)

Watson as Boswell

David Richardson, *The Holmes-Watson Report*, January, 2004

The MPR (Minnesota Public Radio) Writers Almanac for October 29th, the birthday of James Boswell, had this to say, in part, about the birthday boy:

[Boswell] began keeping a journal in London and developed a style that made him one of the greatest diarists in English literature. Instead of describing his thoughts and feelings about things, he wrote down scenes from his life as though they were fiction. He described his friends as though they were characters and recorded long stretches of dialogue.

This description could well characterize Holmes's own "Boswell," and illustrates nicely what I wish to say about Dr. Watson as a writer.

Watson chose to present his writings about Sherlock Holmes in the guise of fiction (which was what Holmes was really objecting to when he chided Watson for "romanticizing" them).

I had often wondered why he chose to do this, but then reflected: who is the most famous "character" in fiction? Why, Sherlock Holmes, of course! Watson quite ingenuously sensed that this was the best way to secure his friend's immortality - and he was right, of course!

Think about it. Who but a history buff remembers Melbourne -- a man who was, after all, Prime Minister of England. But who doesn't remember Sherlock Holmes?

Watson, in a brilliant insight, realized that he could secure the memory of his very real friend by turning him into - in the eyes of the public - a fictional character.

There is a moral here, and it is that, as the old bards knew, we remember stories much better than unadorned facts.

An anecdote trumps a dry recital of fact every time (which is the despair of medical researchers trying to stamp out ineffective "alternative" medicines).

Watson sensed this, and so made of his friend the most recognizable character in all of English fiction.

If we are to pierce the fictional veil of Watson's stories so as to behold the true greatness of the very real "Sherlock Holmes," we must teach ourselves to recognize Watson's fictional devices, and his use of them to present his friend to the world.

If we do, we can, I believe, come one step closer to appreciating the true greatness of the man the world came to know as Sherlock Holmes.

The first, and most obvious, device that Watson employed is not something likely to be thought of as a "device" at all.

I refer to the fact that Holmes's cases are presented as near-contemporaneous narratives in which Watson seems to know no more than he would have at the time.

While he sometimes speaks to the reader (usually at the beginning) in what might be called the reader's time, he always reverts to "case time" when telling us about it.

That this was not the only way he could have related Holmes's investigations is evidenced by Holmes's expressed opinion that he should have presented "a series of demonstrations."

Can you imagine what would have happened to Holmes's memory had Watson actually written those "demonstrations"?

'The case began when client X called upon us on...The particulars which he/she related to us were...The first thing Holmes undertook to do was..."'

Bleat, unmitigated bleat. Indeed, when Holmes came to attempt his own reporting of cases, he acknowledged the correctness of Watson's judgment by following -- if somewhat clumsily -- the pattern Watson had chosen.

Another "device" which Watson employed was what Christopher Morley called the "cozy interiors" which begin our most favorite stories.

These cement for us both the friendship of Holmes and Watson and the deductive skills of Holmes himself.

The exhibition (and this is where those "demonstrations" actually take place) of those skills, in circumstances where their correctness can be immediately verified, prime us to accept those other exhibitions in the case to follow, when we must often rely on Holmes's abilities to certify their correctness.

Watson -- to somewhat repeat myself -- knew we would need this, and seized upon this device to give us that necessary assurance.

That these introductions often were not the actual events preceding the initiation of the case should be fairly obvious from the fact that Watson was able to move one from one case to another without

causing any sense of disjunction. (I refer, of course, to the mind-reading episode which migrated from "The Cardboard Box" to "The Resident Patient" without causing any sense of inappropriateness.)

Indeed, if one stops to think of it, why would Watson -- who took such notes as he could on Holmes's cases -- bother to record what he and Holmes were doing just prior to when a client called? (Unless, of course, it bore some direct relation to the case, as when Mrs. Hudson was knocked up because Helen Stoner had called at an early hour.)

Another somewhat clearly fictional device in the stories is the great fuss made about Holmes's abhorrence of publicity -- which has prevented Watson from publishing his reports, etc., etc.

If a man whose hotel room can be ankle-deep in congratulatory telegrams seeks to prevent his actions being reported, he has missed something somewhere.

Holmes was, quite obviously, a famous man in his time, and if Watson seeks to present him to us as a man who shunned the limelight, it is the better to fix him in our minds as someone dedicated to his cause.

His cause. Holmes "retired" quite early (by our terms) from his detective work - before he was fifty if the deductions of Sherlockians are to be accepted.

For a man who, up until that retirement, showed no great interest in the natural world to retire to farm bees quite boggles the mind.

My own suspicion is that had Von Bork opened that slim volume Holmes presented to him he would have seen blank pages.

It is entirely probable that it took the combined presence of the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister to get Holmes to go to America and begin his infiltration of the Bork spy ring, but I beg leave to say that that meeting almost certainly did not take place in a cottage on the South Downs.

What did Holmes do after he "retired?" My guess - and I have to admit that it is no more than a guess -- is that he went to work for his brother, who had need of his energies in the increasingly complex world of the early twentieth century.

Watson turned what may have been the first of these investigations into the amusingly clever tale of "The Bruce-Partington Plans."

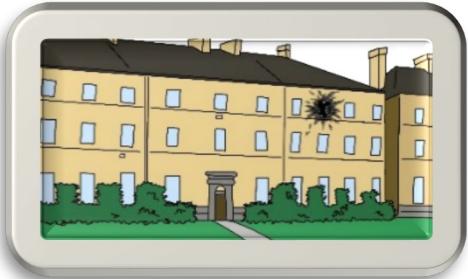
He has, if not romanticized it, then dramatized it, in his own pawky way (I cannot think that Mycroft liked the comparison of himself to a tram-car).

Holmes, in his career, clearly moved from investigating small cases brought to him to undertaking many which involved and affected the course of history in Europe in what proved to be the run-up to the First World War.

Watson would seem to have observed a silence about, until, after the war had begun (and was, by the way, not going well for the Allies), he felt compelled to explain that his friend had done the best he could to prevent it.

He did so and, 'abandoning his own unique voice, gave us one of the most graceful of all *ave atque vales* we shall ever read. Stand with me upon the terrace ...

Baker Street Elementary



Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason

