

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 14, No. 02 February, 2026
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star
founded November, 1970*



PLEASE NOTE: **March 01, 2026 Meeting** NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on **March 01** 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 Twisted Lip**".

Bob Katz, BSI, ASH, will lead the discussion on the story.

Our special guest speaker will be our own **Scott Monty**, BSI, co-host of I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere.

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

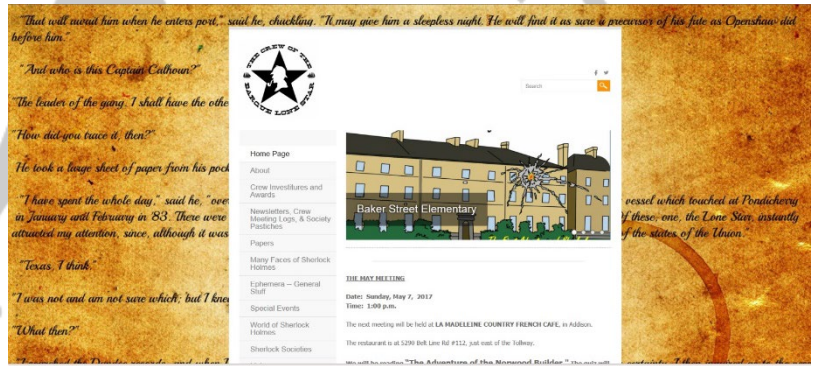
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You can friend us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar>

<p>Who dunnit:</p> 	<p>Third Mate Helmsman Spiritual Advisors</p> <p>Secretary Historian Webmaster</p>	<p>Steve Mason, BSI Walter Pieper Don Hobbs, BSI Dr. Jim Webb, BSI Cindy Brown, BSI Pam Mason Rusty Mason</p>	<p>mason.steve8080@gmail.com waltpieper@att.net 221b@verizon.net jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com myrkrid08@yahoo.com</p>
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Our Website:

www.dfw-sherlock.org



Our Facebook Page:

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

FEBRUARY 01 SUMMARY

There were **79** in attendance at this ZOOM meeting.

We started the meeting today with a toast given by **James Raglan**. The toast was dedicated to the many scion societies around the country.

Next, we had the quiz on this month's story, "The Adventure of the Five Orange Pips".

Our own **Bob Katz**, BSI then let us in a discussion by throwing out a leading question such as, "I really like this story because or I really hate this story because..." Every other person had to say why he liked the story and the others had to say why they hated the story. It was a lively discussion enjoyed by all. He then asked us what are items in this story, that keep reappearing in other stories in the Canon. Where does Bob get these ideas?

We then went on to announcements; the first announcement was given by **Steve Mason**, BSI letting everyone know the crew of the Barque Lone Star is working on their next book to be published. This will be a two-book set. The books will be the 11th and 12th. The two book set, the first of which will be written by kids to be published and the other book will be written by adults for kids. October 1st 2026, is the deadline for your submissions. Everyone that submits a story gets a free copy.

Tiger Daniels told us that she is working feverishly portable Sherlock Holmes stories books, and she's happy to provide one to anyone that would like one. It's a miniaturization of Sherlock Holmes story in the form of a doll house.

Rob Nunn, BSI told us that the next meeting of the Parallel Case of Saint Louis will be February 21st 2026. He also noted that Holmes in the Heartland conference plans are coming along and wanted to remind people to make your reservations soon, especially for the hotel.

This coming Saturday **Brad Keefauver**, BSI and **Bob Katz** will be the guest speakers at the Rosenbach.org zoom call.

Carla Coupe, BSI and **Margie Deck** donated their gift certificates for the Beacon Society. Books from the Mysterious Bookshop will be auctioned off from the proceeds of the certificates.

If anyone wants to donate items to be auctioned at the Holmes in the Heartland Conference please contact **Rob Nunn**.

Matt Hall, BSI told us about the Watson Tin Box scion society which meets every month. They have a quiz which is one question from each of the stories in the Canon. **Edith Pouden** won the quiz this month and the quiz is noted to be extremely difficult.

Shanna Carter, BSI noted that the Ash Wednesday dinner will be February 4, at Connolly's Pub.

Madelaine Quiñones, BSI told us that the John H Watson Society meeting is the last Sunday of the month and it will be at 2:00 PM Eastern Time. You need to register online.

Carl Stix told us that next meeting of Ronald Adair's Card Room will be February 19th at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. They will be discussing *Watson and Holmes and Daughter*.

John Shimborg told us that the Torist International meeting will be March 20 in Chicago. He also told us that the Vincent Starrett conference will be October 23rd through 26th and it's called It's Always 1895.

Sandy Kozinn graced us with a limerick on this month's story.

Steve Doyle, BSI gave a brief update as the new Wiggins. He told us the BSI is supporting scion societies, and the scion societies really run the Sherlockian world and everything is really built from the bottom up. He will be visiting scion societies across the country, and is promoting close relationships between the BSI and the societies.

Our guest speaker this month was **Sara Halter**, with the Indiana University Medical History

Museum. Her presentation was the state of anatomy when Dr Watson was practicing medicine. It was an absolutely fascinating presentation.

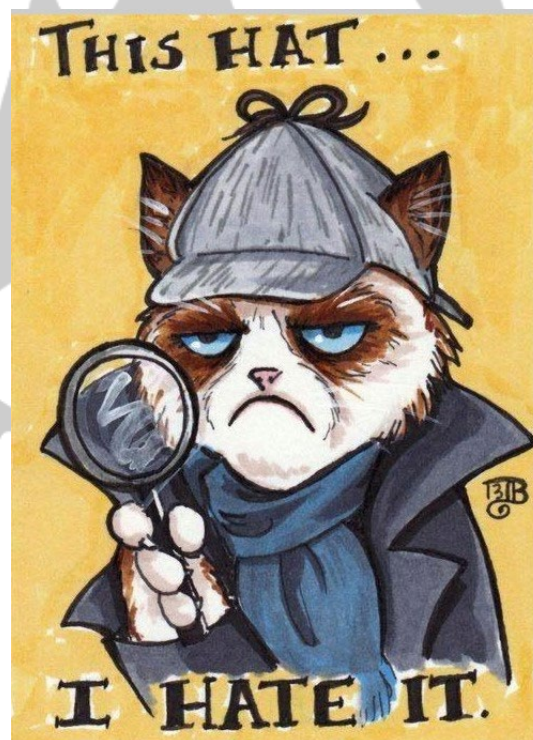
Rich Krisciunas, BSI educated us about Canonical Law 101 and How the Five Orange Pips might have used the coroner in their story. And the summary of that would be that Calhoun would be found not guilty.

Brad Keefauver gave us the Canonical top 10 based on this month's story.

Shana Carter did a reading from the *Baker Street Journal* on the dynamics of a Sputnik.

Rich Krisciunas then did a closing toast to the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

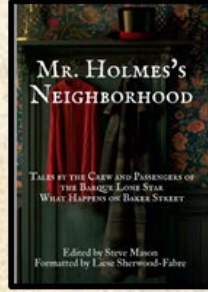
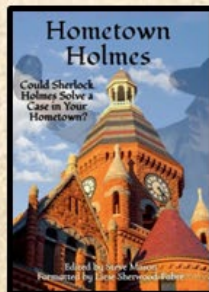
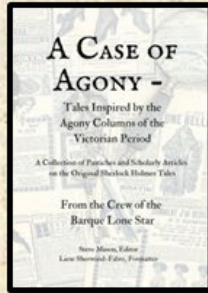
[Thanks to Cindy for taking the minutes as always.](#)



The Crew of the Barque Lone Star Society has published 10 wonderful books. Each book is chocked full of wonderful essays and pastiches by our own Society members. You may download a free copy of the books (as .pdf, Nook, or Kindle files) on our website...

<https://www.dfw-sherlock.org/society--crew-member-anthologies-pastiches.html>

Or you may purchase a soft-back version of any of our books (at cost) at...
<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/s/the%20crew%20of%20the%20barque%20lone%20star>



The Crew of the Barque Lone Star Society is producing our 11th book in our 56th year of existence, in partnership with The Beacon Society!



The average Sherlockian was first exposed to Sherlock Holmes at the age of 11 years old. The Crew and Beacon Society is producing a two-volume book set to help young readers enjoy Sherlock Holmes.

The 1st volume will be stories, illustrations, poems, etc. authored by younger Sherlockians. The 2nd volume will be authored by adult Sherlockians.

1. Stories should be 3,000 – 5,000 words, which is the average length for a short story. Shorter stories are also welcome.
2. **This is a family book, with minors participating. The target audience is 8-13 year olds, so entries should be age-appropriate.**
3. Your story will be proofread by volunteer editors for grammar, mechanics, and punctuation. No edits will be made to the content of your story.
4. This project is not limited to Crew or Beacon Society members. Any Sherlockian is welcome to participate.
5. The anthology will be finalized by the end of the calendar year, so we ask for entries to be submitted by October 1 to mason.steve8080@gmail.com.
6. All participants will receive a complimentary book as our thanks.

The final product will be published in book form and posted on our websites and shared with all society members as a .pdf, Kindle, and Nook file for free. Physical copies of the books will be sold on the Barnes & Noble along with our other books at cost.

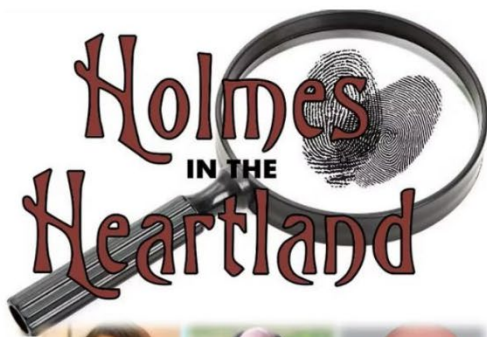


THE 2026 HOLMES IN THE HEARTLAND WEEKEND

Meet us in St. Louis July 24-26 for a weekend featuring a Friday night welcome reception, Saturday full of speakers, lunch, vendors, banquet, after-dinner entertainment, and a Sunday tour of the Missouri History Museum.



parallelcasestl.wixsite.com/home/holmes-in-the-heartland



Speakers Lineup

Michael Dirda
Johanna Draper Carlson
Randy Getz
Jay Ganguly
Bob Katz
Ira Matetsky
Marisa Mercurio & Sarah Kolb
Scott Monty



Save the Date

TORISTS INTERNATIONAL S.S.

WHICH IS THE TRUE CAPED CRUSADER?



OR



MARCH 28, 2026

Our speaker will be Johanna Draper Carlson - whose topic is *Superhero Sherlock Holmes - He has met various super heroes but is he one?*

The event will be at The Great Escape Restaurant, 9540 Irving Park Road, Schiller Park, Illinois 60176, starting with social time at 6:30. The cost is \$40 per person. First time attendees are only \$35 each.

Registration is done by sending a check payable to Torists International S.S. to 9003 Lincolnwood Drive Evanston IL 60203, or paying by paypal (friends and family) to toristintss@gmail.com. The cost goes up to \$45 on March 20th.

Jonathan Shimberg
toristintss@gmail.com
Co-Chief Stewards

Linda Crohn
Evportial121@aol.com

The Torists International S.S. presents

And it is always
1895

An exploration of the life and work of
Vincent Starrett



Vincent Starrett, poet, mystery author, journalist, and bibliophile, is best known for his deep passion for detective fiction, especially the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Starrett played a foundational role in the development of Sherlockian scholarship with his 1933 book *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, a cornerstone of Holmesian literature, blending biography, literary criticism, and imaginative speculation about the Great Detective's world. A founding member of The Baker Street Irregulars and a towering figure in the Chicago Sherlockian scene, Starrett's lifelong devotion to Sherlock Holmes continues to influence generations of fans and scholars alike. *And it is Always 1895* will celebrate Starrett's life and work.

Where: Chicago, Illinois | **When:** October 23–24, 2026

Scan the QR code, or visit www.anditalways1895.org to see the list of speakers. Questions? Please email starrett1895@gmail.com.



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IF INCONVENIENT, COME ALL THE SAME.”



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March 21, 2026
Fairborn DOUBLETREE INN
Formerly THE HOLIDAY INN
DAYTON, OHIO



New Hotel, NEW Banquet in the hotel Ballroom with Guest Speaker, Erica Dowell, Curator of the BSI Archive, Lilly Library

Go to AgraTreasurers.net for more information...
but a few tidbits...

Great Speakers

George Skornickel, Bob Katz, Mary Alcaro/Ed Pratt, Erica Fair,
Mark Curtis, Ann Lewis, Bob Bernier, & Kyndall Potts

Great Vendors!

Friday Night socializing in the Hotel Bar, Saturday Banquet

Registration \$85 (If registered after 1/31/2026, \$90)

Come join the fun!

ON THE DYNAMICS OF A SPUTNIK

Shana Carter, BSI

The Baker Street Journal, (Editor: Edgar W. Smith)
Vol. 8, Num 1 – January, 1958

When James Moriarty, produced his apocalyptic treatise on *The Dynamics of an Asteroid*, he raised to stardom a small celestial body which was orbiting not about the earth, but about the sun.

The mechanics of a merely lunar trajectory, we may suppose, lay contemptuously beneath the soaring level of his genius; yet the auguries he propounded in the wider spheres, and the things for which he stood, have lingered on to mock us as the sputniks circle in the nearer skies.

In the great work which left his contemporaries uncomprehending, Professor Moriarty drew a startling parallel between the sidereal system and its atomic counterpart, and argued boldly that both the macrocosm and the microcosm were inherently unstable and susceptible to disintegration.

His postulation of the immanence of energy in the phenomenon of mass, and the introduction into his calculations of a factor correlated with the speed of light, leave little doubt that it was he, and not Professor Einstein, who first perceived the awful potentialities of atomic fission and fusion.

So we can thank this great intellectual — if thankfulness is in order — for the ultimate unleashing of that titanic force which holds so much for latent good or evil — and which, to cite the case in point, — was doubtless called upon, just two short months ago, to hurl an instrument weighing half a ton into continuous orbit about our planet.

All this that Moriarty did in his chosen field of mathematical physics is frightening enough, but it is not as disastrous, we must fear, as the damage he has wrought in the minds and hearts of men. Here was a genius, a philosopher, an abstract

thinker possessed of a brain of the first order — and yet, withal, a wicked man.

Here was an intellectual, yes — but an intellectual fallen from grace. And so he stands today a symbol of all that he became, and not of what he once had been.

It is to this symbol that the intellectuals of our own day in the United States have been sacrificed: it is because we have thought of them as Moriarty's in the embryo that we have kept them out of high places and denied ourselves the achievements they might have brought.

It was not essential to this denial that, like Moriarty, they should fall from grace; it was enough that they should fall from our esteem.

We ridiculed them as eggheads, and looked down at them. It is our shame that we in America should have distrusted and persecuted men of great mental ability; it is our sorrow that the Russians have revered and exalted such men.

And because that is so, we can say with every truth that it was Professor Moriarty who ordained the dynamics of the sputnik.

CHARLES M. SCHULZ
2162 COFFEE LANE
SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA 95472

January 30, 1968

Miss E. B. Byrne
2192 Morris Avenue
New York, New York 10453

Dear Miss Byrne:

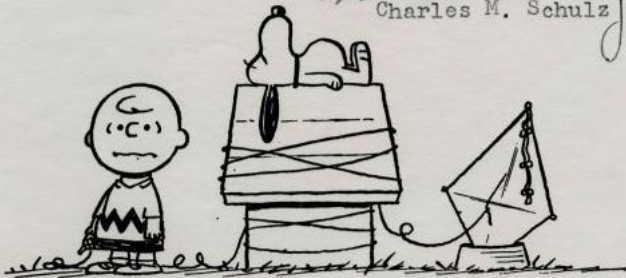
You certainly may have my permission to reprint the letter I wrote to you about the books I enjoyed as a teenager.

I am flattered that you should wish to do so.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,

Charles M. Schulz
Charles M. Schulz



*Treasure Island, Bear Toste,
All of the Sherlock Holmes novels &
stories & a book about newspaper
people called My Last Million Readers
by Danverton*

The following list evolved from a lengthy discussion in the joint meeting of the Journalism club and the library squad. We decided that the following favorite authors would most influence the students' reading choices.

Joy Atkinson
Joan Walsh Anglund
Jim Bishop
Pearl Buck
John Dickson Carr
Robert O'Connell
Laurent de Brunhoff
Len Deighton
Allen Drury
Valter Farley
Paul Gallico
Shirley Ann Grau
John Hersey
Jim Hjelgaard
Harper Lee
Sterling North
Edwin O'Connor
John O'Hara
William Saroyan
Charles Schulz
John Steinbeck
Robert Penn Warren

*Treasure Island, Bear Toste,
All of the Sherlock Holmes novels &
stories & a book about newspaper
people called My Last Million Readers
by Danverton*

A BOY NAMED ISADORA

Karen Murdock

Published in *The Petrel Flyer*
(Vancouver, British Columbia)
Volume 20, no. 4 (Summer 2008)

Some, and not the least interesting, were complete failures, and as such will hardly bear narrating, since no final explanation is forthcoming. A problem without a solution may interest the student, but can hardly fail to annoy the casual reader. Among these unfinished tales is that of Mr. James Phillimore, who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world. No less remarkable is that of the cutter Alicia, which sailed one spring morning into a small patch of mist from where she never again emerged, nor was anything further ever heard of herself and her crew. A third case worthy of note is that of Isadora Persano, the well-known journalist and duellist, who was found stark staring mad with a match box in front of him which contained a remarkable worm said to be unknown to science.

Sherlockians have long wondered about the man so casually mentioned by Watson in “The Problem of Thor Bridge.” We have wondered about that remarkable worm (1). We have wondered how anybody can live long enough to become “well-known” as a duelist. Most of all, we have wondered about his given name. Isadora—like most names ending in “a”—is a female name (the male versions are Isador or Isadoro). But the match box is found “in front of him”—so obviously, in this case, the person named Isadora is a man.

The most likely explanation for the name “Isadora” is that it is a misprint. Arthur Conan Doyle had very legible handwriting, but his lower-case “a” was sometimes confused with his lower-case “o” by the printers who transcribed his tales. (2)

Another explanation may be found in the old Johnny Cash song “A Boy Named Sue.” (3) You may recall the situation:

*My daddy left home when I was three
And he didn't leave much to ma and me
Just this old guitar and an empty bottle of booze.
Now, I don't blame him 'cause he run and hid
But the meanest thing that he ever did
Was before he left, he went and named me “Sue.”*

The upshot of this unfortunate christening is that the boy named “Sue” grows up fighting everyone who teases him about his name. Years later, he runs into his father for the first time in his life in a bar in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. They get into a huge fight (“kickin’ and a-gougin’ in the mud and the blood and the beer”). In the end

*He went for his gun and I pulled mine first,
He stood there lookin’ at me and I saw him smile.*

*And he said, “Son, this world is rough,
And if a man’s gonna make it, he’s gotta be tough,
And I knew I wouldn’t be there to help ya along.
So I give ya that name and I said goodbye,
I knew you’d have to get tough or die,
And it’s the name that helped to make you strong.”*

He said, “Now you just fought one hell of a fight

*And I know you hate me, and you got the right
To kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do.
But ya ought to thank me, before I die,
For the gravel in your guts and the spit in your eye
Cause I'm the son-of-a-bitch that named you "Sue."*(4)

Maybe Papa Persano was thinking along the same lines as the father of the boy named Sue. Maybe Papa Persano named his son Isadora because he intended to desert Mama Persano and the bambino and he wanted the boy to grow up with "gravel in his guts and spit in his eye." If so, it certainly worked. The boy named Isadora apparently grew up so touchy about his name that he ended up dueling (and, presumably, killing) anyone who teased him about it. Maybe Grimesby Roylott in SPEC also hated his name and that helps to explain, in part, his nasty disposition. It is fortunate, indeed, that Sherlock and Mycroft were not so sensitive.

ENDNOTES:

1. The 1976 Baker Street Irregulars investiture of the famous science fiction author Isaac Asimov (1920-1992) was "The Remarkable Worm." Alvin Blomquist in 1955 received the investiture "Isadora Persano."

2. The "Long Island Cave mystery" mentioned in REDC has occasioned much speculation, since there are no caves on Long Island. However, a simpler explanation is that Doyle intended this to be the "Long Island cove" mystery. Owen Dudley Edwards, who edited the volume "His Last Bow" for The Oxford Sherlock Holmes, changed "cave" to "cove" and noted that there are no caves on Long Island and that "ACD's handwriting, while good, has had its 'o' taken for 'a' in other cases." Wags have sometimes suggested that the question raised in BLUE of whether or not a goose actually has a crop can be explained in similar manner.

3. Although made famous by Johnny Cash (1932-2003), who recorded the song at his San Quentin Prison concert in 1969, "A Boy Named Sue" was actually written by Shel Silverstein (1930-1999), who later became famous for his books of comic children's verse such as *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974) and *A Light in the Attic* (1981). Silverstein won a 1970 Grammy award for "A Boy Named Sue."

4. The song has a happy ending then, because

*I got all choked up and I threw down my gun
And I called him my pa, and he called me his son,
And I came away with a different point of view.*

However, the narrator vows that if he ever has a son, the lad will be named "anything but Sue!"

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT “THE ADVENTURE OF THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP”

1. Summary (The Diogenes Club)

Watson is married and in practice.

As the story opens, Kate comes to the Watsons’ house and asks the Doctor to fetch her husband from an opium den, the “Bar of Gold.” Watson does so and finds Holmes there in disguise, looking for clues in a case he is working on. Watson puts Isa in a cab and accompanies Holmes.

St. Clair was an actor, turned reporter. While doing an article on begging for his paper, he realized that a comfortable living could be made thereby. With his gifts for makeup as well as his skill at repartee, he was a very successful beggar.

Soon he gave up his reporter’s job, and subsequently bought a very comfortable home in the country. Eventually he married and had two children. No one knew of his alter ego, who was known as Hugh Boone, except a lascar who kept a boarding house where he changed costumes.

All was going well until his wife came by accidentally and caught him at his room. He had his make-up on and was arrested on suspicion and charged with St. Clair’s murder. He did not reveal his true identity because he did not want to scandalize his wife and children.

He managed to send a letter to his wife (via the lascar), but it was several days before the lascar could mail it because he was watched so closely by the police. St. Clair enclosed his ring in the letter and told his wife that all would be well.

Holmes solves the mystery, goes to the jail, washes off Boone’s makeup, revealing St. Clair and since no crime had been committed, he was freed.

After making him promise to stop begging, Holmes agrees to prevent public disclosure of his situation, thus avoiding a scandal.

2. Story Info Sheet (McMurdo’s Camp)

- First published in:
The Strand Magazine, December 1891
- Time frame of story (known/surmised):
June 1889 given. Date/day of week uncertain/jumbled in conversation with Watson’s patient.
- Holmes & Watson living arrangements:
Watson practicing medicine and living with wife, who calls him “James”.
- Opening scene:
Watson at home w/wife, asked by wife’s friend to help find and retrieve opium addict husband. While at opium den Watson finds Holmes pursuing an unrelated case, and posing as a user to investigate the disappearance of Neville St. Clair.
- Client:
Mrs. St. Clair
- Crime, suspicion, concern:
St. Claire disappeared, wife hired Holmes, having spotted husband in disreputable neighborhood in city, Upper Swandam Lane, a vile alley.
- Villain:
A professional mendicant named Hugh Boone, with a repulsive facial scar, was arrested for the murder of Neville St. Clair, but turned out to be St. Clair himself.

- Motive:
Money. St. Clair had a secret “day job” as beggar, and was making a good living at it.
- Logic / clues used to solve:
St. Clair’s cut finger. Clue given (somewhat clumsily) in story but not explained by Holmes.
- Policemen:
A number of constables with an inspector, met by the client in Fresno Street. They made the initial crime scene investigation. Inspector Barton, who had charge of the case. Inspector Bradstreet, a tall stout official, who had been in the force 27 years.
- Holmes’ fees:
No mention. Holmes stayed at client’s house in the country (Lee, in Kent).
- Food:
A cold supper was set for Holmes & Watson by client when they arrived at her house late at night.
- Drink:
There was a gin-shop next door to the opium den.
- Vices:
Opium den. Neither H or W participate, except for breathing foul air. While at St. Clair house, Holmes ponders the case overnight while consuming an ounce of shag.
- Other cases mentioned:
None.
- Notable Quotables:
“The impression of a woman may be more valuable than the conclusion of an analytical reasoner.” –Holmes
- Other interesting:
The rascally Lascar of the “Bar of Gold”, in the farthest East end of the city, who was known to be a man of the vilest antecedents. (For more info about lascars, see the trifling monograph in the sidebar on the right.)
Holmes client, Mrs. St. Clair, a little blond woman, stood in the open door, clad in some sort of light Mousseline de sole, with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at her neck and wrists, her figure outlined against the flood of light. (Mousseline de sole is a light, gauze-like fabric. Light Mousseline de sole must be especially gauze-like.) We will leave the the speculation to our readers.
Beggar’s ersatz business was selling vestas, the same type of match that once startled a murderous horse.
The “James” business is another field that is ripe for speculation. We like the theory that John H. Watson’s middle name is Hamish, which is the Scottish version of James.

3. Selected Chronologies

a.	The Original Story by Arthur Conan Doyle	June, 1889
b.	William Baring-Gould	Friday, June 21, 1889
c.	H.W. Bell	Friday, June 14, 1889
d.	Roger Butters	June, 1889
e.	Jay Finley Christ	Wednesday, June 19, 1889
f.	Jean-Pierre Crauser	Friday, June 21, 1889
g.	D. Martin Dakin	Friday, June 21, 1889
h.	Bill Dorn	Saturday, June 22, 1889
i.	Henry Folsom	Tuesday, June 18, 1889
j.	John Hall	Monday, June 17, 1889
k.	Craig Janasek	Saturday, June 18, 1887
l.	Brad Keefauver	Friday, June 21, 1889
m.	Toshio Suzuki	Monday, June 17, 1889
n.	June Thomson	Friday, June 21, 1889
o.	Ernest Bloomfield Zeisler	Friday, June 21, 1889

4. Canonical Queries (Ralph Edwards, BSI)

- Did Whitney recover?
- Does an addict retain friends?
- Why "You'll have to go out?"
- What can you surmise about Watson's home?
- Is it customary to drink water with wine?
- Is James the butler, child or dog?
- How did Kate know the den's name and location?
- Why did Watson promise to send (rather than bring) Whitney home?
- What is a slop shop?
- Why a brazier in June?
- Is holding one's breath effective?
- Did "skirt" enhance the theory that Watson was a woman?
- What were "all the other little weaknesses?"
- If there was no fog, what caused the golden tunnels of light?
- Where did Boone get his meals?
- When were the bricks bought?
- Was Mrs. St. Clair a fainting woman?
- Was Mrs. St. Clair making a play for Holmes?
- Why, in England, did the "dollar" win at last?
- Where were the coins exchanged?

- Did the begging arrests result in overnight detention?
- Would there be no prosecution for fraudulent begging?
- Did Holmes collect a fee for this case? If so, what did he tell his client, Mrs. St. Clair?

17 Steps (Brad Keefauver, BSI)

1. Watson's London Gossip Column

"Isa Whitney, brother of the late Elias Whitney, D. D., Principal of the Theological College of St. George's, was much addicted to opium," this tale begins. While the Hounds have often discussed Watson's protecting the identities of Holmes's clients, here's a case where the doctor seems to be going out of his way to publicly humiliate a public figure whose brother has a problem. What's worse is that Isa's wife is a good friend of Watson's wife. How could Watson bring friends of his family into the tales in such a manner, even if he changed the names? Are we seeing clues to a Watson beloved by his reading public, but hated by anyone who came under the reign of his pen?

2. The Honeymoon Sure Isn't Over!

"There came a ring to my bell, about the hour when a man gives his first yawn and glances at the clock. I sat up in my chair, and my wife laid her needle-work down in her lap and made a little face of disappointment."

While I find it a little chauvinistic that Watson refers to the doorbell as "my bell," even when the ringer is a friend of his wife, I'm encouraged by the fact that Mrs. Watson seems to be making cute little disappointed faces when her husband won't be coming to bed with her. In prim and proper Victorian times, could a yawn and a glance at the clock be a subtle proposition between a husband and a wife? Can we assume the Watsons' marriage is going well based on the data in this story?

3. Working Late Again, Dear?

On the other hand, we have signs of trouble in paradise. Watson says it is the hour of first yawn, yet he is newly come back from a "weary day." Has the good doctor missed supper at home and taken it elsewhere? Perhaps in the company of someone who might afterwards make him weary?

And then there's Mrs. Watson, referring to her husband as "James." Is no one innocent in this den of betrayal? Or is the Smash guilty of vicious slanders that the Hounds must now squash immediately? (If these last two postings seem a bit bawdy, recall that this is the only tale with the word "orgies" in it -- I blame Watson!)

4. A Master Of Disguise!

No, not Neville St. Clair or Sherlock Holmes. Dr. Watson says, "I felt a sudden pluck at my skirt," as he walks through the opium den. If we eliminate night-shirts and Scottish kilts, at what part of Watson's clothing was Holmes plucking?

5. The United Nations Of Dope

A Malay attendant. A Danish assistant. An East Indian Lascar. So many cultures, all working together to provide opium for the stressed-out citizens of London at the Bar of Gold! Was Victorian London all as culturally intermingled as this? Watson pays Isa Whitney's bill at this fine establishment (they even let opium addicts run a tab), and one has to wonder what two days worth of opium cost him. Any guesses? How much money might Watson have been carrying on him during a given evening at home, as it was enough to pay off a drug dealer? Or was the opium much cheaper then?

6. How Rich Was Rich In 1887?

"We should be rich men if we had L1000 for every poor devil who has been done to death in that den," Holmes says to Watson. Now, as the common version of that phrase in modern day America goes, "If I had a nickel for every time ..." one has to wonder at the sizeable difference between a nickel and a thousand pounds. While it takes a whole lot of nickels to make a man rich in any era, thousand pound notes (if such existed at the time) will make you wealthy a whole lot faster. But how many of them would it have taken back then? And, following that, roughly how many people would we guess had been killed at the Bar of Gold?

7. Toys R Hugh Boone

"She sprang at a small deal box which lay upon the table and tore the lid from it. Out there fell a cascade of children's bricks." Toys are always of interest to certain child-like adults among us, including the discussion leader. What manner of bricks did they sell for children in small deal boxes in 1887? Wooden bricks? Clay bricks? Gold bricks? And did children do anything with them that would have been different from what children do now, such as build houses and forts?

8. Inquiries In Kent

"But why are you not conducting the case from Baker Street?" Watson asks.

"Because there are many inquiries which must be made out here," Holmes replies.

Just last week in reading "Five Orange Pips," we saw Holmes engage in exactly the opposite behavior, shunning Horsham to stay in London and follow what evidence was there. What might Holmes have found so intriguing in Kent when the crime seems to have definitely occurred in London, to a man who spent his days in London? Did Neville St. Clair have any interests in Kent that could conceivably have caused his disappearance?

9. Gentlemen, Start Your Engines!

"A little blonde woman stood in the opening, clad in some sort of light mousseline de soie, with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at her neck and wrists. She stood with her figure outlined against the flood of light, one hand upon the door, one half-raised in her eagerness, her body slightly bent, her head and face protruded, with eager eyes and parted lips, a standing question."

The ladies present will forgive me if I reprint the paragraph above for the benefit of the Lascar and the rest of the young men among us. Watson does such a lovely job verbally painting Mrs. Neville St. Clair within the confines of Victorian sensibilities that it's plain he held that sight near and dear in his visual memory. While the gentlemen of Sherlockiana have been favoring us with their opinions of these ladies for years, perhaps it's time we heard from the other side. How do the female Hounds feel about Watson's descriptions of the fair sex in the Canon? Is he a respectful aficionado or just another gawkin' guy? And what manner of memory was the doctor holding of Mrs. St. Clair at the door? The eager eyes mentioned later or the outlined figure that he comes to first?

10. Watson On The Campaign Trail

"I am an old campaigner," Watson tells us in this story. What exactly does he mean by that? He's not really "old" yet is he? And he was only in that one campaign, and for not all that long at that, was he? Could Watson truly be called "an old campaigner," or was he exaggerating a bit to impress the lady in the mousseline de soie?

11. The Only Paper In The Bar Of Gold

Mrs. St. Clair receives a note "Written in pencil upon the fly-leaf of a book, octavo size, no water-mark."

Apparently the fly-leaf of a book is the only paper available in the Bar of Gold at a moment's notice. With no other paper in the place, it even seems remarkable that a book was present. Anyone care to speculate on what that lonely tome in the opium den might have been?

12. Marrying Your Psychic Friend

"There is so keen a sympathy between us that I should know if evil came upon him. On the very day that I saw him last he cut himself in the bedroom, and yet I in the dining-room rushed upstairs instantly with the utmost certainty that something had happened."

Mrs. St. Clair's telepathic bond with her husband has always fascinated me. Such things between identical twins are almost expected, but between husband and wife? The paranormal question of the hour, however, is this: was Mrs. St. Clair telepathic, sensing her husband's distress, or was she actually clairvoyant, picking up vibrations of the disappearance about to occur?

13. Who's Making All The Racket?

Okay, Hounds, let's curb our Beavis and Butthead impulses for a moment and look at the following statement with no cheap shots: "So he sat as I dropped off to sleep, and so he sat when a sudden ejaculation caused me to wake up, and I found the summer sun shining into the apartment. The pipe was still between his lips . . ."

Watson doesn't say if he understood the shout that woke him or not. He doesn't say if it was Holmes's voice or not. And we find Holmes, innocently close-mouthed with pipe firmly in place, finally removing it to calmly ask, "Awake, Watson?" While the prime shouting suspect seems to be Holmes, what might his shout have been? "Eureka!" or "Hey, Watson!" "YES!!!" or "ACK! Damned burning hot tobacco ash!" Was it embarrassing enough that Holmes had to pretend he was calm and non-yelling by quickly returning to puffing on his pipe?

14. The Dawn Of Dr. Watson

"I found the summer sun shining into the apartment." It is 4:25 A.M. As your leisurely discussion leader rarely experiences consciousness at that hour, I have to ask: does that really happen? Baring-Gould claims the June sunrise in England comes during the hour between 3 and 4 a.m., yet even the earliest risers in the town are only looking out their windows as Holmes and Watson drive by. How does anyone sleep in June with all this bright sunshine? Those poor men who "work from sun to sun," suddenly seem not all that different from the women whose "work is never done."

15. Those Dutiful Men Of Bow Street

It's still very early when Holmes and Watson arrive at the Bow Street police station. Yet when Holmes asks, "Who is on duty?" the officers guarding the front door are respectful enough not to answer, "All of us, you silly popinjay." Beyond that, they actually salute him. Why would police officers salute a known civilian, even if he was highly respected? And what is an inspector doing there at that hour? What were the duties of an inspector in those days?

16. The Fine Art Of Make-Up Removal

Watson writes: "Never in my life have I seen such a sight. The man's face peeled off under the sponge like the bark from a tree. Gone was the coarse brown tint! Gone, too, was the horrid scar which had seamed it across, and the twisted lip which had given the repulsive sneer to the face!"

Watson's not the only one who has never seen such a sight in his life. What kind of fabulous makeup completely distorts a man's features, yet wipes off with a sponge and water in two wipes?

17. Whoops, Watson Does It Again

"If the police are to hush this thing up, there must be no more of Hugh Boone," Inspector Bradstreet tells Neville St. Clair at the tale's end. Yet Bradstreet has no idea that a soon-to-be bestselling writer of tell-all exposes is standing in their midst. While it's true neither Holmes or Watson promised to keep St. Clair's secret, isn't Watson ruining one more person's life by publishing this story, as he did to the McCarthy/Turner couple a tale or two ago? Why does he keep doing this?

5. View Halloas (Rosemary Michaud)

An opium den! That sordid yet oddly romantic atmosphere of smoke, dreams and danger! Our beloved Watson leaves the bright comfort of his home to descend, like Orpheus, into the dark underworld of the Lascar's lair. But unlike Orpheus, Watson finds that good things happen when he looks behind him. Whom should he discover but Sherlock Holmes in disguise, hot on a case, and with a fast horse and trap waiting down the street! Which of us wouldn't jot a quick note of explanation to the spouse and go along with the great detective?! In a moment: A trio of wandering husbands, a Rascally Lascar, and a vision of mousseline de soie, as we discuss "The Man with the Twisted Lip!"

A Trusty Comrade: This story begins with a very special sitting room scene: the room is not in 221B Baker Street, and the two people are not Holmes and Watson, but rather Watson and his wife (presumably Mary, in between visits to her mother.) The doorbell rings – is it a client? And why not? Watson tells us that "Folk who were in grief came to my wife like birds to a light-house." It reminds me of Holmes, whom Watson described as the "unofficial adviser and helper to everybody." It's fascinating to think that Watson found some of the same qualities in his wife that he admired in his best friend. Do you think Mary Watson and Sherlock Holmes were similar in any other respects besides their inclination to help people in trouble? (I suspect Holmes never called his friend "James," at any rate. . . .)

While Mary stayed with Kate Whitney, Watson went alone to the Bar of Gold, and by pure coincidence, this was the very place where Sherlock Holmes happened to be working on his latest case. But was it a coincidence that Watson should have come to the very same opium den?

Can any of the Hounds construct a scenario in which Holmes somehow arranged for Kate Whitney to visit the Watsons?

One of the facts I recently discovered when reading the book *Opium: A Portrait of the Heavenly Demon*, is that the "proper" position for smoking opium – the one that gives the best results – is recumbent, with the head on a small pillow. For Holmes to sit upright to do his smoking would have been noticeable at the least, and a dead giveaway at the worst. Did the Lascar see through Holmes's disguise? If so, why didn't Holmes end up as one of the bodies who left the den by way of that notorious trap door to the river?

A Standing Question: Mrs. St. Clair's doorway appearance in her sheer nightie is a standing joke as well as a standing question among Sherlockians. But are there aspects of this lady which even her mousseline de soie does not reveal? Consider the following facts: Mrs. St. Clair was not afraid to go to London by herself to pick up a parcel from the Aberdeen Shipping Company, even though its office was obviously in a bad part of town. She did not hesitate to open the door of her home to Sherlock Holmes, a man she hardly knew. Nor did she bat an eye when he brought a friend along with him. When she saw her husband's face at the Lascar's window, she never hesitated to rush right down into the opium den to come to his rescue. When Holmes asked her if her husband showed any signs of taking opium, she apparently did not need to ask what those signs might be.

Given these facts, how about a few questions: Had Mrs. St. Clair figured out that her husband did not have any regular business contacts in the city, and was she determined to find out where he went and what he did? Was there really a package waiting for her at the shipping company, or did she have some other reason to be in that neighborhood of London? If there was a package for her, what was in it? Did Holmes in fact suspect Mrs. St. Clair of some complicity in her husband's disappearance? Did he bring Watson

back with him to her house in part to see what her reaction would be when he showed up with a second man whom she would at first imagine to be her missing husband? Would Holmes have brought “John” the driver along with him to the Cedars for “protection” if he hadn’t bumped into Watson?

6. Delicate Questions (Chris Redmond, BSI)

At least four of the sixty Sherlock Holmes stories have titles that refer to distorted or concealed faces — five, if one counts the facial marking that gives Silver Blaze his name.

Is that only to be expected in detective stories, given the connection between masks and criminality, or is some kind of obsession revealing itself?

7. Additional Thoughts (Steve Clarkson)

A respected businessman, husband, and father is missing. The last person to have seen him was his wife, who saw him in the upstairs window of an opium den. He was never known to have partaken of opium or to have frequented that part of town. His suspected killer is a powerfully-built cripple with a hideous scar on his face that writhes his upper lip away from his teeth. The businessman’s body is nowhere to be found, but his clothing, or most of it, is found hidden in the room where he was last seen. There is a bloodstain on the window overlooking the turgid Thames River, and then at full high tide. When the tide recedes his coat is found, pockets stuffed with small change, but there is no sign of his body. This is the riddle that Holmes was called to solve by the businessman’s attractive wife.

This is the riddle that Holmes was called to solve by the businessman’s attractive wife.

In REIG, Holmes says that he never makes assumptions, and yet in TWIS he must have made a series of them, beginning with the assumption that Mrs. St. Clair had indeed seen her husband in the window of the Bar of Gold. He made another assumption when he gracefully accepted Mrs. St. Clair’s assertion that the handwritten note she had received was indeed authored by her husband. There are further assumptions which flow from these if any Hounds care to trace them.

One of the premises of TWIS is that a capable beggar could make quite a decent living at his “trade.” Neville St. Clair as Hugh Boone did just that, it seems. But his story raises questions, some of them not at all related to begging, which need answering. For example, why did Kate marry Isa Whitney when she knew him to be an opium addict since his days at college?

To the best of my knowledge, this is the only Adventure in which Holmes drives a horsedrawn vehicle. We are told that the dog-cart was “flying” along and that Holmes “lit his pipe” when he came out of his silent meditation. Is it possible to drive a dog-cart and still be able to light a pipe while moving at a smart clip? The original driver of the dog-cart, John, was left on foot, alone, in the dead of night in some of the vilest and meanest streets of East London. Why could Holmes not have let him come along at least until he could be dropped off in a more respectable part of town?

In a different vein, Neville St. Clair said of his decision to beg professionally for a living, “It was a long fight between my pride and the money, but the dollars won at last...” Why would he, a Victorian gentleman, speak of “dollars” when all his life he had dealt with pounds and pence?

For the thespians among us: How does one go about making “a good scar” that will withstand the tugs and pulls of facial muscles while speaking, be strong enough to hold the upper lip in a “perpetual snarl,” and yet be water-soluble?

For the barristers among us: Holmes says that Hugh Boone “pretended to a small trade in wax vestas” in order to be protected from the laws against begging. Later, Holmes asks, “But what was a fine to him?” The implication there is that Boone had nevertheless been arrested on more than one occasion, but what would have been the basis for the arrests if Boone was operating in a technically legal fashion?

And since it’s bound to arise in the week’s discussion anyhow, was Mrs. St. Clair glad to see Watson when he arrived in company with Holmes? Did she have hopes that Holmes was bringing her husband back with him when she set out a cold supper for two while she was waiting? And why did Holmes involve the long-suffering Watson in this case in the first place? Surely, he took a calculated risk in revealing his true identity to Watson right there in the vile opium den where his natural enemies, or rather his natural prey, were all about him. If he had wanted Watson along, wouldn’t he have wired him in advance rather than risk detection on the spur of the moment? Did he bring Watson along to give him some breathing room from the alluring Mrs. St. Clair and her *mousseline de soie*?

8. Questions & Comments (Sonia Fetherston, BSI)

9. 56 Stories in 56 Days (Charlotte Anne Walters)

I have used the story of Mr Neville St. Clair, the faux beggar, extensively in my own novel, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

And I can remember exactly the moment at which the idea came to me to intertwine the two tales. I was on my honeymoon sitting by the beautiful infinity pool at a lovely hotel on a tranquil Greek Island, writing pad in hand as always. Without giving away too much about the plot, I was basically playing around with the idea of Professor Moriarty ordering his henchmen to snatch beggars from the city streets. Who would miss a lonely old beggar? Who would even notice he had gone? But then the idea struck me, what if the person wasn't really a beggar at all but actually in disguise? What if he did have a concerned family who would contact Holmes for help – drawing him into the crime which would ultimately put him onto a collision course with my protagonist? Perfect.

I reached into my beach-bag for the ever present Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes and re-read *The Man with The Twisted Lip* then celebrated my brainwave with a lovely Greek salad while looking out to sea.

Upon re-reading the story today it's hard to put my own story aside and just comment on the original. It's just that it proved to be so pivotal in my own tale and such a perfect example of what I wanted to do with *Barefoot* – intertwine the original stories with my own in a sensitive and imaginative way without simply trying to re-create Doyle's style but instead using this as inspiration to create something which both new and existing Holmes fans would love.

It seems like such a long time ago (I've been married four years now) when I had that moment of inspiration beside the infinity pool (incidentally it was the best hotel pool I've ever had the pleasure to lie next to). I had no idea how much hard work lay ahead to actually finish my novel but was full of hope and optimism that I could change my life and achieve my dream of becoming a bestselling author.

Anyway, apologies for the serious digression and back to the story.

What is going on between Sherlock Holmes and Mrs Neville St. Clair? There is something very odd about this one. When Watson goes to rescue his patient from the opium den and finds Holmes inside, they leave together and Holmes asks Watson to accompany him as he investigates his latest case, casually pointing out that his room 'at the Cedars is a double-bedded one'. 'The Cedars?' asks Watson, perplexed. 'Yes; that is Mr St Clair's house. I am staying there while I conduct the inquiry'. This presents various points of interest from the casual way he refers to her home to the issue of why he needs to be there in the first place.

The Cedars is in Lee, Kent, and perfectly commutable from London. Mrs St Claire isn't in any danger, the house is not the scene of the crime, the man disappeared in the city not at home, so why on earth is Holmes staying there in a double bedded room – and why does Mrs St Clair answer the door to him wearing a 'mousseline-de-soie with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at her neck and wrists'? Good God it's like 'Carry on Detecting'.

Other points of interest are the fact that Holmes is more than happy to share his room with Watson (though not the bed) and this shows the extent to which he feels comfortable with him. This is also the story in which he talks of Watson's 'Grand gift of silence' which makes him 'Quite invaluable as a companion'. *The Man with the Twisted Lip* clearly, and rather touchingly, demonstrates the depth of their friendship.

Fluffy pink chiffon aside, the most unusual thing about this tale is the fact that Dr John H Watson suddenly becomes James – according to his wife.

I really enjoyed re-reading this story – as much for the comedic value and personal memories as anything – and will happily score it a hilarious 8 out of 10.

10. Observance of Trifles (Brian Keith Snell)

The Adventure of Beggars Can't Be Choosers!

The Man With The Twisted Lip is one of the more popular of the **Holmes** stories, for some very good reasons. Yes, part of it is the seemingly fantastical set-up that turns out to actually happen in the real world now and then:

Another reason is **The Man with the Twisted Lip** is a true "*fair play*" mystery, with all of the clues laid out for us and for Holmes, and not dependent on some esoteric bit of knowledge Holmes possesses but the readers do not. He solves it by "*by sitting upon five pillows and consuming an ounce of shag*" and thinking, rather than, say, recognizing a particular bit of dirt (that was never described to the readers) can only come from Surrey-on-Puddlethwaite, so therefore etc. As a result, Holmes' revelation of **Neville St. Clair** at

the end seems less like a magic trick (as in **A Study In Scarlet**) and more like something we could have figured out, too.

But perhaps the biggest reason *The Man with the Twisted Lip* works as well as it does is its central issue resonates so well, even with a modern audience: *shame*. I'm sure many of us know someone who has had to turn to means they're not particularly proud of in order to make ends meet, something they're very anxious friends and family not find out about. This embarrassment is more universal than merely violating some Victorian class system. Hard times or bad luck or youthful foolishness have forced many of us to take jobs we felt beneath us, or to make a living in ways that skirt moral or legal or social boundaries.

Everyone has secrets they don't wish to share, secrets so embarrassing to them they would "*rather die*" than have them become public knowledge. So many of us have a natural sympathy for St. Clair and his plight.

Of course, Doyle gives us a very complex characterization of St. Clair. He's not just some luckless chap who was forced into this life; he chose it because he could make more money this way. Despite being the son of a school master, Neville has a lot of natural arrogance that makes him a bit prickly.

St. Clair took up begging rather than the "*arduous work*" of being a newspaper reporter. Not to diss on reporters, because everyone works hard at their jobs--but come on, Neville, it's not as if you were digging ditches or mining coal. And even though he thought being outed as a beggar was so shameful that he "*would have endured imprisonment, ay, even execution,*" rather than have his secret revealed, he displays a feisty arrogance about what a good beggar he was.

"I do not mean that any beggar in the streets of London could earn 700 pounds a year--which is less than my average takings--but I had exceptional advantages in my power of making up, and also in a facility of repartee..."

He's ashamed by the begging, but he's simultaneously pompous about how good he is at it! What a splendidly human reaction.

One problem I do have with this story is that, like several of Doyle's tales, the story ends fairly abruptly, without some of the resolution and follow-up that we crave. We're left desiring to know how things ended up with the St. Clair family. How did **Mrs. St. Clair** react upon Neville's return? Did he confess the secrets of his lifestyle to her? (The **Granada** adaptation makes clear that he did, as they burn his begging clothes and accessories together). Did he keep his solemn oaths, and never take up begging again? Then how did he maintain his £700+ per year lifestyle? He could have gone back to being a reporter, but certainly he couldn't have maintained the **Cedars** and a family on £2 per week. Would they have to sell their estate? Could he take up a career on the stage? If not for his great shame and fear of "*blotting his family's name,*" I suppose he could write a best-selling memoir (and how-to manual?). It seems certain that the St. Clair family was about to experience some *significant* changes, and the audience is left wanting for even the smallest scrap of what was in store for them. (I like to think that Mrs. St. Clair understood and forgave Neville, and not wanting to give up their lifestyle or uproot their family, approved and aided him in setting up a new beggar identity in a new location. And perhaps even took up begging herself, as well as their children. But that's just me...)

Still, the fact that we do want to know more demonstrates how well **Doyle** has sketched the characters and the situation. And it demonstrates how universal the terror of having a secret shame exposed can be, even if it is a fairly harmless one.

OTHER TRIFLES AND OBSERVATIONS:

** This story always prompts discussion of how realistic the idea of making a substantial living from begging is. The 2013 example above aside, the problem is that most of the cases people talk about are anecdotal or hearsay, without a lot firm evidence to back them up. Which isn't surprising, as we're dealing with what is largely a transient population that isn't filling out tax forms.

In **The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes**, editor **Leslie Klinger** mentions (with no citation) a census which showed that in 1838, London had 8,000 professional beggars, who raked in over £365,000 that year--an average of £45 each.

There's obviously a ton of wiggle room in such numbers, but certainly there was a at least *some* basis for Doyle believing that St. Clair's earnings were possible, if *well* above the average.

** In the Granada adaptation, Mr. St. Clair only saw Neville because she stopped to give some money...*to children begging*. Nice added dramatic irony.

** Once again, we get a look at what a thoroughly solid and splendid chap **Watson** is. In the middle of the night, he will go to rescue a friend from a two day bender in an opium den, *and even pay the guy's (no doubt sizable) tab!!*

So of course, the **1964 BBC** version completely *eliminates* the entire subplot--no Watson rescuing **Isa Whitney**, no Watson accidentally encountering Holmes in the opium den, leading to him accidentally joining the St. Clair investigation. Probably because making Watson look like anything but a helpless and perpetually befuddled buffoon was not on their agenda (and probably beyond **Nigel Stick's** abilities).

Many have commented that **Mrs. Watson** must have been furious with Watson going off on an adventure with Sherlock with no notice, perhaps even leading to divorce.

Poppycock! It wasn't so long ago, in **The Boscombe Valley Mystery**, she was not only giving her blessing, but *encouraging* him to go on multi-day mystery-solving road trips with Holmes. Mary knew the role Holmes played in Watson's life, and in their getting together, and there's little reason to think her attitude had changed.

** As in **The Sign of The Four**, Doyle has Watson present a strong anti-drug message, no doubt reflecting the author's own

beliefs. Reading his description of a besotted Whitney ("*yellow, pasty face, drooping lids, and pin-point pupils, all huddled in a chair, the wreck and ruin of a noble man*"), and the way he makes the opium den seem like the most wretched hive of scum and villainy, surely scared many a reader away from the evils of poppy derivatives. Opium was legal in England at the time these were written, so Doyle was being a bit of a crusader here.

** For the second time, we have a woman who has no clear idea what her husband does for a living, *or even where he works* (see also **A Case of Identity**). Even for a male-dominated chauvinistic period such Victorian England, that is simply amazing to me. Especially as, in both cases, the lack of information was because the husband was hiding something. Ladies, for heaven's sake, at least get a work address for your spouse!!

** Many commentators have taken the following passage...

As we approached, the door flew open, and a little blonde woman stood in the opening, clad in some sort of light mousseline de soie, with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at her neck and wrists.

She stood with her figure outlined against the flood of light, one hand upon the door, one half-raised in her eagerness, her body slightly bent, her head and face protruded, with eager eyes and parted lips, a standing question.

"Well?" she cried, "well?" And then, seeing that there were two of us, she gave a cry of hope which sank into a groan as she saw that my companion shook his head and shrugged his shoulders.

...as an indication that Mrs. St. Clair had *romantic designs* on Sherlock.

Needless to say, this is a fairly serious misreading. Very clearly, she gave a cry of hope at seeing two, which meant she was eager to see her husband again. And she's quite happy to bruise Holmes' ego when she shows him the letter she received from Neville.

If anything, the scene perhaps shows *Watson's* interest in *her*, given that he wrote about her in (what some find) such alluring terms.

** Watson tells us quite clearly that **a)** the story takes place in "June of '89" and **b)** that his part in the tale starts on "Friday, June 19th." Of course, June 19th was a **Wednesday** in 1889.

This is the kind of thing that drives players of **The Great Game** nuts.

** Good heavens, after Mrs. St. Clair spots Neville, and after she heads off to find some police, why go to all the trouble of getting back into make-up and costume while trying to throw all your clothes into the river? Why not just *leave the premises quickly*, so you won't be found there in either guise? Or, why not just pick up an opium pipe and pretend to be a customer? Surely that's less shameful to him than being exposed as a beggar, right? Instead, Neville chooses the action that takes the longest, and guarantees that he'll be caught. Silly man...

** Mrs. St. Clair declares, "*I am not hysterical, nor given to fainting.*" Of course, at least as related by Holmes, she *DID* faint earlier, at the sight of blood in the **Golden Bar**. Holmes wasn't there at the time, so was he misinformed? Or was this just Mrs. St. Clair's somewhat elliptical way of promising not to faint *this* time?

** For those who wish to paint Sherlock as a misogynist, this quote from Holmes cuts both ways: "*I have seen too much not to know that the impression of a woman may be more valuable than the conclusion of an analytical reasoner.*"

You can read this in a couple of ways. On the one hand Sherlock could be seen as saying that women are not analytical reasoners. On the other hand, he's acknowledging women's impression may be more valuable than reasoning, and in fact, in this case she is very much right.

As always, Holmes' character and opinions are more complex than many want to admit...

