

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 04, No. 06 - June, 2016
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



From the Editors: Thanks for all your support. Steve & Walt

July 3rd Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, July 3, at LA MADELEINE COUNTRY FRENCH CAFE, in Addison.

The restaurant is at 5290 Belt Line Rd #112, just east of the Tollway.

We will be reading "The Adventure of Silver Blaze."

The quiz will cover this tale.

Each monthly meeting will also include toasts as well as general business, introductions, and general fellowship.

June 5th Meeting

There were 15 attendees on hand. A wonderful opening toast was written and delivered by Cindy Brown on Sherlockian societies (see page 2).

Walter Pieper and Bill Pervin tied on the Quiz, based on "The Wisteria Lodge", both being awarded books on Sherlock Holmes.

Steve Mason led a discussion on one aspect of the story, that of Holmes' assessment of Miss Burnet, including the statement that her age and character preclude a love interest as a motive in the story. A variety of subjects broached during the discussion ranged from the expectation of marital prospects according to a female's age during the historical time period to the status or class of a governess.

Tim Kline was invested as a Deck Mate, and received the certificate with an English penny.

Based on evidence from the Baker Street Journal, and interviews with long-standing members, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously voted on to accept the month of April of 1970 for the establishment of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

The Crew also voted to move forward on holding the second symposium at the Allen Library in late October or early November. The theme for this symposium would be "The Women of Sherlock Holmes," whether from the books, pastiches, stage, or television and film.

The closing reading was "To Martha Hudson," by Beldon Wigglesworth, from the March, 1973, Baker Street Journal (see page 2).

The full minutes may be viewed at our webpage: www.dfw-sherlock.org.

Thanks to Brenda Hutchison for developing the minutes this month.



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

You can follow us on Twitter at: @barquelonestar

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

Who dunnit:



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Helmsman
Spiritual Advisors

Secretaries
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SCION SOCIETIES

Cindy Brown

We've all heard of the Baker Street Irregulars and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

But there are a few lesser known scion societies that I would like to honor today.

For instance, there is the Baker Street Vienna Society, the Copenhagen Speckled Gang, the Reichenbach Irregulars, and the Retired Beekeepers of Sussex.

We certainly could never forget to give a tip of the hat to the Cardboard Boxers of Croydon, and the Scandalous Bohemians, and how about Holmes on the Range, and the Wisteria-Hysteria Society.

And then, there is always the Napa Valley Napoleons, the Pips of Orange County, Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients, and Sherlock Holmes' Dumber Brother.

Lest we forget to mention the scions of the Priory School Dropouts, the Iowa Valley of Fear, or the Occupants of the Empty House, as well as the Speckled Bandits of Silver Springs, and Martha Hudson's Cronies.

And we could never fail to mention the Maiwand Jezail Scion Society, and the Dog in the Night of Taos, NM, and our friends to the north, the Afghanistan Perceivers of Tulsa, and the 221 Bees of Belgium.

And where would we be without the Bitches of the Beeches, or the Chaslockians of Charleston, SC, the Knights of Shag, the Gooseclub of the Alpha Inn, and the Notorious Canary Trainers.

But the one that takes center stage on Sherlock Holmes fireplace mantels is of course, the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

Please raise your glasses to toast this society, and others around the world.

TO MARTHA HUDSON

By Belden Wigglesworth, *Baker Street Journal*, March, 1973

I wonder, Martha, if you thought
Across the years of all you'd wrought
In Baker Street, for you were there
To welcome the Immortal Pair,
Unsung, unheralded, unsought.

Your days in Baker Street were fraught
With worries, perils, nerves all taut,
Yet seemingly you'd not a care...

I wonder, Martha...
Then at the end, with Von Bork caught,
Upon the South Downs you still brought
To high achievement your calm air
And gentle spirit. Can we share
In your deep secret, we untaught?

I wonder, Martha...

Please go to:

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source of Sherlockian scholarship!

17 STEPS TO SILVER BLAZE

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

Seventeen thoughts for further ponderance of the case at hand...

HIS OWN PERSONAL CNN



“Fresh editions of every paper had been sent up by our news

agent,” Watson writes.

We all know London had a lot of papers in those days, but did everyone have a newsagent to deal with their newsprint needs? Or did most folks get by with a paperboy or two?

VERY EXCELLENT FOR WHAT?

Holmes asks Watson to bring his “very excellent field glass” to King’s Pyland with him, but never makes use of it. What would Holmes have expected to do with it? Scan the moors for the missing horse? While Holmes does use the glass four days later at the big race, it never seems to come into play during that first trip. Was Holmes just planning ahead, or was there an earlier purpose for taking it?



FLYING ALONG TO EXETER FIRST CLASS

As the classic Paget illustration for this tale so beautifully shows, Holmes and Watson had window seats in a first class carriage on the train to Dartmoor. What exactly were the amenities to be expected in first class rail transport of that

era? Was anything but privacy included for the price?

HOLMES’S BLUNDER

If ever we wondered whether Holmes was more devoted to the “art” of detection or the actual cause of justice, this tale has some pretty heavy evidence for the former. Both Silver Blaze’s owner and Inspector Gregory ask Holmes on Tuesday to investigate the trainer’s murder and the horse’s theft. Holmes,



however, expects the matter to take care of himself, and waits until Thursday to head to the scene of the crime. When Scotland Yard asks for help with a murder, isn’t it the prerogative of every red-blooded, patriotic, justice-loving son of England to answer the call? What’s with Holmes’s prima donna act?

NOTHING SINISTER ABOUT SHERLOCK

“Holmes, leaning forward, with his long, thin forefinger checking off the points upon the palm of his left hand.”

Can we therefore assume Holmes is right-handed?

HADN’T STRAKER HEARD OF WEIGHT WATCHERS?

After only five years of being a jockey, John Straker is forced to retire because he’s become too heavy. Couldn’t this guy say “no” to second helpings, even if his career depended on it? Did

anyone go on diets back then? How much did Straker’s age have to do with his weight?

THE INVALID SUBDIVISION NEXT DOOR

“About half a mile to the north there is a small cluster of villas built by a Tavistock contractor for the use of invalids and others who may wish to enjoy the pure Dartmoor air.”

The term “villa” has implications of elegance and upscale living. Were there enough wealthy invalids who wanted to live in Dartmoor to make such a business venture viable? Was the pure Dartmoor air noted for healthful benefits, or was the London reek so bad any countryside would have been equally healthful to city folk?

THE OTHER MISSING HORSE

“You’ve two horses in for the Wessex Cup--Silver Blaze and Bayard,” the tout tells the stable-boy. Yet when we look down the card on the day of the race, Bayard is nowhere to be found. What happened? With Silver Blaze’s whereabouts unknown, wouldn’t Colonel Ross have left Bayard in for the Wessex Cup?



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE TOUT'S HAND

The visiting tout takes a piece of white paper folded up" out of his pocket. Later, Edith Baxter notices "the corner of the little paper packet protruding from his closed hand." So what was it? Folded paper, as a note would be, or a packet, as would contain opium or money? Or was the word "packet" just a terminology red herring dropped in by Watson or his literary agent?"



VICTORIAN FORENSIC CHEMISTRY

"Finally, an analysis has shown that the remains of his supper left by the stable-lad contained an appreciable quantity of powdered opium ..."

How would the stableboy's dinner have been tested for opium in that period? An actual chemical test or something as simple as feeding it to a dog?

THE LION OF SCOTLAND YARD

While poor Lestrade is always compared to smaller creatures like rats and bulldogs, Inspector Gregory is said to have "lion-like" hair and beard. What exactly does that mean? Lion-like in color, style, or what?

IT DOESN'T GET ANY MORE CIRCUMSTANTIAL THAN THIS

We are told of Silas Brown and his stable: "As Desborough, their horse, was second in the betting, they had an interest in the disappearance of the favourite. Silas Brown, the trainer, is known

to have had large bets upon the event, and he was no friend to poor Straker."

Add the possession of the stolen horse to those facts, and you come up with quite a case against Silas Brown. Had Scotland Yard been the ones who discovered Silver Blaze at Mapleton, there is little doubt the trainer would have been behind bars and found guilty of murder and horse theft. Wouldn't Brown have taken this into consideration upon finding Silver Blaze on the moor?



Holmes's manipulation of the events surrounding the Straker murder are so heavy-handed that one might even wonder if he was helping the true murderer escape by pointing the finger at Silver Blaze, who can't defend himself or tell where he's been held. Was Brown another Leon Sterndale, whom Holmes let escape the consequences of his crime? What motive might Holmes have had for helping Brown get away with murder?

EXIT, STAGE LEFT!

When the carriage leaves King's Pyland, who is in it? If only Holmes and Watson, we are treated to a failed dramatic moment as Holmes says:

"Gregory, let me recommend to your attention this singular epidemic among the sheep. Drive on, coachman!"

The coachman then ignores Holmes, and the carriage stays put. Instead of dropping his vague exit-line and being whisked away, Holmes is left sitting in front of an

audience that wants more. Colonel Ross just looks disgusted at this ploy, and Inspector Gregory gets a chance to ask more questions.

Holmes recovers quickly in one of the most memorable exchanges in the Canon, but was it his original attempt to leave matters with the line above? If Colonel Ross and Inspector Gregory are also in the carriage, and the coachman did obey Holmes and was driving the lot of them away as Gregory asks his questions, why was Holmes commanding Ross's driver?

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE GARDEN PARTY

"Surely I met you in Plymouth at a garden-party some little time ago, Mrs. Straker?" Holmes asks the victim's widow. We know he's lying of course, especially as a garden-party was most certainly one of those "unwelcome social summonses which call upon a man to either be bored or to lie."



Time for the more socially enlightened Hounds to fill us in on this thing called the garden-party. What makes a garden party? Is it merely a cocktail party with flowers and sunlight? Would Sherlock Holmes have ever attended one for real? Of what social standing would we expect the attendees of a garden party to be? Would a horse trainer's wife be included, or was Holmes flattering Mrs. Straker?

THE TOUT WHO CARRIED A PURSE

“He says that it was a ten-pound note. One was found in his purse.”

Purses appear in male possession several times in the Canon, and I’ve always assumed that these were something like a large clasp coin purse.

Where did men carry their purses back then? Trousers pockets? Coat pockets? Did the purse contain anything besides money?

THE MILLINER’S BILL AND THAT FANCY DRESS

William Derbyshire’s bill from Madame Lesurier of Bond Street is

made out for thirty-seven pounds fifteen.

We’re told of a twenty-two guinea dress, which accounts for about twenty-three pounds of that bill, but that leaves fourteen pounds of unknown merchandise.

Was it another dress? Or accessories for that dove-colored, ostrich-feathered monstrosity?

What sort of added items of clothing might Straker’s mistress have made him buy her at Madame Lesurier’s to go with the dress? Would said dress have been bought for attending a special occasion, or just as an impressive gift?

THE LATEST THING IN DRIVEWAY PAVING

Watson writes of “the paving of asphalt which led up to the gates of the Mapleton stables.”

We don’t usually think of asphalt driveways in association with Holmes’s era, but there you have it.

How common was asphalt paving in those days, and was it an indication of wealth or progressive thinking?



WHAT’S IN “MORIARTY”?... answers

How clever WERE you? Test yourself. We asked if you could find more than TEN words of FIVE or more letters in the name “MORIARTY”

To make it a little more challenging, if you use the singular form a word, such as HOLE, do not then also count the plural form HOLES. ... and no proper nouns need apply. Here is what Rusty and I came up with.

AMITY	AMORT	ATOMY	RATIO	TOMIA
MARTYR	ARMOR	MORTAR	ROTARY	
MAYOR	MARRY	TARRY	RARITY	
MORAY	ARMORY	TRYMA		

IF IT'S A PRINT, IT MUST BE TRUE

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

In “The Adventure of the Norwood Builder,” a bloody thumb print appears to clearly identify the murderer. Despite Lestrade’s certainty of the evidence, however, Holmes remains skeptical. (1)

Given where this story lies in the chronological order of the canon, as well as when the story was first published, both Lestrade and Holmes were on the cutting edge of the day’s forensic science. (2)

Based on events and remarks in the story, the case is estimated to have occurred in August, 1894. Sherlock had reappeared after his triumph over Moriarty, Watson had rejoined his friend at 221b, and Holmes searched the murder scene under the August sun. (3)

Only two years before, Sir Francis Galton published his treatise *Finger Prints*, which identified three characteristics for identifying and comparing impressions (loop, whorl, and arch). These attributes, now referred to as Galton’s details, are still used today. (4)

Sir Edward Richard Henry further developed these classifications and provided the system adapted by Scotland Yard when its fingerprint branch was created in 1901, (5) two years before publication of “The Adventure of the Norwood Builder.”

The first scientific study of fingerprints, or “skin furrows,” appeared in *Nature* in 1880. Dr. Henry Faulds, a Scottish medical missionary in Japan reported on his observation of finger-marks in ancient pottery, which led to the study of monkey and human finger tips.

He was the first to propose using prints to identify criminals, hands or arms severed from bodies, and possibly family members. (6)

Sir William Herschel, a British civil servant stationed in India, responded to *Nature* in the next issue that he had used fingerprints for signing contracts since 1860 and had noticed no two matched. He, however, did not suggest its uses for criminal matters. (7)

Galton, a relative of Charles Darwin, intrigued by what he’d read, corresponded with Herschel

extensively and published his book in 1901, offering it as an addition to an earlier system of body measurements, anthropometry, used to identify criminals.

Developed by the Frenchman Alphonse Bertillon, this first classification process involved eleven body measurements considered unchangeable after the age of twenty and was the basis, along with photographs and other information such as hair and eye color, for the files maintained by the French Police Identification Service.

With some reluctance, Bertillon, who considered finger prints a rival to his work and system, added the right thumb print to the files.

His unwillingness to fully embrace this new research led to a major embarrassment when he was unable to identify a print found at the scene of the Mona Lisa theft in 1911 because it came from the man’s left thumb. (8)



Additional difficulties with prints, such as blurred or partial impressions, were studied by Edmond Locard, a student of Bertillon. In 1913, he discovered it was possible to plant false prints using a finger fashioned by tree gum. (9)

This sort of deception, however, had been shared by Doyle ten years earlier. Holmes determines the bloody print found at the scene had been planted using a similar procedure with wax. (10)

Ever on the cutting edge of forensic science, Sherlock demonstrates his extensive knowledge of the use—and misuse—of fingerprints even before it became standard practice.

- (1) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Kindle Location 20040). Kindle Edition
- (2) Steven Doyle and David Crowder, Sherlock Holmes for Dummies (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2010), p. 160.
- (3) http://www.sherlockpeoria.net/Who_is_Sherlock/ChronCornerReturn.html#NORW
- (4) <http://www.fingerprintamerica.com/fingerprinhistory.asp>
- (5) <http://onin.com/fp/fphistory.html>
- (6) E. J. Wagner, The Science of Sherlock Holmes. (Hoboken , New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006), pp. 99-102.
- (7) <http://www.fingerprintamerica.com/fingerprinhistory.asp>
- (8) E. J. Wagner, The Science of Sherlock Holmes. (Hoboken , New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006), pp. 99-105.
- (9) Ibid, p. 107.
- (10)Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Kindle Location 20151). Kindle Edition.

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD. You can read more about this award-winning author's writing (as well as her previous articles in the Bilge Pump) and sign up for her newsletter at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com. A non-Sherlockian adventure can be downloaded at: <http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com/extras.html>

56 Stories in 56 Days -- The Adventure of Silver Blaze

Posted on October 26, 2011 by barefootnbakerstreet

Today is my husband's birthday and therefore it is quite a coincidence that I should be writing about Silver Blaze, as it is his favourite Sherlock Holmes story, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Husband used to be a racing journalist and remains a very knowledgeable admirer of the sport. I suppose it is quite natural therefore, that Silver Blaze should be his favourite.

As today is his birthday, my little blogging challenge is causing a degree of friction between us. He wanted to go out for the day, have Sunday lunch in a lovely country pub and spend the afternoon walking together before celebrating with a few friends tonight – but what about the blog?

My suggestion that we stayed in tonight so that I could re-read Silver Blaze and write my blog was met with – “It's like you're having an affair with Sherlock Holmes, he certainly gets more of your attention than I do.”

I must admit that trying to cope with my full time job at our busiest time of year, helping to look after my mother who has dementia and write this daily blog is quite a challenge. Yes, husband is being neglected.

So as I will be out tonight, here's a quick round-up of my thoughts on Blaze, which is easy really because I absolutely love the story too and re-reading it was a pleasure. Followers of my blogs will know that Blaze was my favourite Granada episode because they captured the humour and

adventure aspect of the original so perfectly, and Jeremy Brett was on top form.

But the actual story has much to shout about too from the playful way Holmes toys with a sceptical colonel Ross to the way he deduces the truth about what really happened to the thoroughbred out on the moor.

Everything is brilliant; the way Holmes knows that the stable boy was poisoned because the curry would have been strong enough to disguise it, the discovery of the groom's double-life, the significance of the lame sheep and, of course, the immortal line about the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.

What's not to love in this clever, inventive tale? 9 out of 10.

An Inquiry Into "Silver Blaze"

Murray, the Courageous Orderly (a.k.a. Alexander Braun), Hounds of the Internet

Silver Blaze was first published in "The Strand Magazine" in December 1892. According to Baring-Gould's chronology, as set down in "The Annotated Sherlock Holmes," Second Edition, 1974, the case takes place on Thursday, Sept 25 to Tuesday, Sept 25, 1890. At the time Holmes is 36 years old and Watson 34.

Notable Quotes:

"The difficulty is to detach the framework of fact--of absolute, undeniable fact--from the embellishments of theorists and reporters."

"Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time." "The dog did nothing in the night-time." "That was the curious incident."

Holmes' Delay

Holmes tells Watson he ignored the telegrams he received from Ross and Gregory for some two days before deciding to intervene in the case and travel to King's Pyland. Somehow, in view of the fact he was being asked to help by both Silver Blaze's owner and the police, this appears somewhat atypical. The excuse he gives, that he could not conceive of such a horse being concealed for so long also sounds peculiar. I cannot think of any other case--known to be of importance from its beginning--in which Holmes seemed to be so vacillating in taking part. Can any of the Hounds come up with another?

The Scene of the Crime

Whenever we study this case, I always wonder why John Straker did not attempt to cripple Silver Blaze at the stables? Consider he had already drugged Ned Hunter, so he would not have been aware of Straker's presence, and conditions there were better for what he wanted to do--the lighting, for example; instead of a guttering candle he would have had the benefit of a lamp.

If someone had come in while he was working on the horse, he could have given excuses that would not raise any suspicion. Instead, he chooses to take the horse out of the stable at night, an action that would be difficult to justify had someone seen him and asked what he was doing. He then goes out to the moors at night with Silver Blaze to cripple it there and, if everything had gone as he had planned, he would again have risked discovery and difficult questions when bringing the horse back. As to the other two who slept in the loft, they must as been as good as drugged if they didn't react to the horse being taken. Even if, as Holmes said, the horse's reaction had awakened the soundest of sleepers, Straker could have explained it without raising the kind of suspicion that would result from his being caught removing the horse from the stables at that hour.

Silas Brown--Twit

It would be interesting to know why Holmes was so certain Brown would carry out his instructions to the letter. After all,

if after Holmes had left, Brown had let Silver Blaze go, nobody would have been able to track the horse back to him or to even suggest that it had been kept hidden by him. Even if Brown believed Holmes had seen him take the horse from the moor, it would still have been a matter of his word against the other's, and the evidence provided by the tracks would have been insufficient to have him charged.

The Incognito Silver Blaze

Although it certainly adds to the story's dramatic ending, I don't think a disguised Silver Blaze would have been allowed to race. When one considers not even its owner recognized it, none of the racing authorities would have such a horse, ostensibly without any pedigree or papers showing it had been officially entered and accepted to participate, to race. Certainly, the public betting its shillings and pounds would have objected.

What else happened in 1890:

EMPIRE

- Helgoland ceded to Germans.
- Work of Rhodes Pioneers begun in Southern Rhodesia.
- Britain annexes Uganda.
- Britain recognizes French Protectorate over Madagascar.
- Treaty of Busah: improved Franco-British relations in West Africa.
- Zanzibar Settlement: Tanganyika becomes Imperial Germany Colony; Germany excluded from Upper Nile;

British Protectorate over Zanzibar.

BRITAIN

- Parnell vindicated of Phoenix Park murder charges; ruined by O'Shea divorce petition; rejected as leader of Irish Nationalists in Commons, resigns.
- Omnibus strike in London settled with 12-hour day.
- January 4, Daily Graphic launched, first daily illustrated paper. Merged with Daily Sketch in 1926.
- Horniman Museum opens.
- First part of Rosebery Avenue opened.
- Dulwich Park, gifted by Dulwich College, opens.
- Vauxhall Park opens.
- City and South London Railway from Stockwell to William, first deep level tube railway.
- London-Paris telephone line opened.
- Financial panic in London and in Paris.
- Lunacy Act gives management of asylums to visiting committees.
- Housing of Working Classes Act.
- Sir B. Baker and Sir J. Fowler complete cantilever Forth Bridge (for railway) at Queensferry, near Edinburgh; length 1.3 miles.
- Gilbert writes, Original Comic Operas.
- Barry writes My Lady Nicotine.
- Booth writes, In Darkest England.
- Caine writes novel Bondman.
- Sir James George Frazer writes, The Golden Bough (to 1915).

- Morris writes News from Nowhere.
- Sir William Watson write, Wordsworth's Grave.

WORLD

- Bismarck dismissed.
- German control over East African territories.
- Wounded Knee massacre.
- Idaho and Wyoming are admitted into the Union.
- Workmen in France allowed compensation for contracts broken by employers.
- William III of Holland dies; Luxembourg passes to Duke of Nassau.
- Fall of Bismarck; Caprivi made Imperial Chancellor; start of personal rule of William II.
- Zemstva Law in Russia; limited franchise in local government; excluded intellectual professions.
- Russia attempts to limit Finnish Control over customs and money.
- First meeting of Japanese Legislature under new Constitution.
- French miners to elect delegates to supervise safety while working.
- In Chicago, the first entirely steel-framed building erected.
- French Explorer Monteil's journey Niger-Kano-Tchad-Tripoli; completed 1892.
- First Chinese cotton mill constructed.
- Olderbank Clubs (q.v., 1882) in Italy suppressed.

ART

- Franck, Belgian organ composer dies.
- Cézanne paints Mme. Cézanne in the Conservatory.

- Degas paints Dancers in Blue.
- Pietro Mascagni writes Cavalleria Rusticana.
- Van Gogh paints Portrait of Dr. Gachet, Street in Anvers, dies.
- Prince Igor, commenced by Borodin (dies 1887), completed by Glazunov and Rimsky-Korsakov.
- Tschaikovsky composes Queen of Spades.
- Whistler writes, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies.
- Paul Claudel presents Tête d'Or.
- Stefan George writes, Hymnen.
- Arno Holtz writes, Die Familie Selicke.
- Ibsen writes, Hedda Gabler.
- Zola writes, La Bête humaine.

SCIENCE

- Bertillon publishes La photographie judiciaire, in which he explains his anthropometry (q.v., 1882).
- Emil von Behring, German bacteriologist, discovers immunity to tetanus can be given by use of serum; introduces name "antitoxin."
- Halstead, at John Hopkins Hospital, first to use rubber gloves in surgery.
- Moving-picture films, precursor of cinematography (q.v., 1894) shown in NY.
- Cyanide process of preparation of gold from crude ore developed in South Africa (q.v., 1887).
- Lockyer's theory of stellar evolution.
- P. Rudolph's anastigmatic camera lens.
- Discovery of Cleopatra's tomb.

Reichenbach Where We Started

By Rosemary Michaud, Holmes and Watson Report, Sherlock Peoria

They call it the Grand Game, but sometimes I like to think of these Sherlockian studies as if I were coloring in a great big coloring book. Although the pictures are already drawn, I get my choice of colors with which to fill them in. Hours of creative fun for kids of all ages! Coloring within the lines is optional! Color as you will, of course, the picture retains its original outline. For instance, I believe wholeheartedly in Watson's account of Holmes's duel with Moriarty. However, I will go so far as to admit that there are gaps in the narrative. I think that Watson and his literary agent had to make some deep cuts in the text to achieve a word count that was acceptable to The Strand Magazine. There are nagging little questions that can never be solved without Watson's or Holmes's complete notes. However, we can reason logically from what we see, and use our big box of crayons to fill in some of the gaps.

Let's start with that first big conversation between Holmes and Moriarty in "The Final Problem." I love this scene. I loathed Moriarty from the moment he appeared in Holmes's sitting room and delivered his opening line, "You have less frontal development than I should have expected." Translating from professor-speak into plain English, this becomes, "Gee, Sherlock, I guess you're a lot smarter than you look." A puerile taunt, if ever I heard one. What a louse! And the Professor kept it up. Although he scored a legitimate point by noticing Holmes had a revolver in the pocket of his dressing gown, Moriarty's next remark, "You evidently don't know me," was yet another slimy attempt at gamesmanship. However, I don't think the Professor was saying to Holmes "You don't recognize me," because it really was obvious Holmes knew who Moriarty was. I think Moriarty was taunting Holmes for being afraid, saying in effect, "If you think I'm going to kill you, then you don't understand how I operate. Don't you know I never do my own dirty work?"

On any level, however, either by feature or by modus operandi, Holmes certainly did know his adversary. As he told Watson later on, Moriarty "does little himself. He only plans." However, I think Holmes was also aware Moriarty was not likely to have come to Baker Street alone. The "something in his eyes" which made Holmes glad to have his revolver handy was probably Moriarty's unconscious shifting of his glance in the direction of his confederates. They may not have

been very far away; perhaps they were just outside the sitting room door, having slipped into the house with their chief. You'll notice that Moriarty was apparently not shown in by Mrs. Hudson. Instead, Holmes tells Watson, "the door opened and Professor Moriarty stood before me." I think that Moriarty and at least one of his henchmen (Colonel Moran?) waited until the landlady was out, so that there would be no witnesses to the murder of Sherlock Holmes. But Holmes was alert and quick to arm himself against the danger. Yes, I firmly believe that if Holmes hadn't had his gun so handy, he would have been killed then and there. Why else would Moriarty have bothered to come at all?

You don't believe Moriarty came merely to warn Holmes off the case, do you? Why should the Napoleon of Crime go to the trouble, when murder was so much easier? Holmes told Watson Moriarty "saw every step" Holmes took against him, and, "this morning, the last steps were taken, and three days only were wanted to complete the business." He said also, "Matters have gone so far now that they can move without my help as far as the arrest goes, though my presence is necessary for a conviction." Once they were all arrested, what would Holmes have to fear from those "extreme measures" which the professor blustered about? How much more effective and certain it would be to simply kill Holmes without delay. That business about how Holmes's death would have been "a grief" to Moriarty was just so much horse manure. Holmes smiled to hear it. He knew better than to believe it.

Holmes's flight to the Continent is probably the least analyzed area of the story, because it seems so obvious that Holmes fled England when Moriarty made things too hot for him to safely remain. Be that as it may, I don't believe Holmes's choice of travel itinerary was as random as he led Watson to imagine. On the contrary, I think the Continental tour was largely intended to provide still more evidence against Moriarty. In fact, it is very possible that Holmes expected to obtain that last piece of damning evidence from someone he had arranged to meet, someone who, for whatever reason, could not see him until "Monday, next" when, as Holmes told Watson, "matters will be ripe." Note that in the first portion of their trip, Holmes and Watson went straight to Brussels and stayed there two days. This is hardly suggestive of precipitous flight.

Consider this, also: one day of travel plus two days in Brussels accounts neatly for all three of those days that Holmes said were necessary to "complete the business." It seems logical to conclude that Holmes went to Brussels because he was going to meet someone there on Monday.

Holmes may have obtained his case-clinching evidence in Brussels, but it was not long afterwards that he got the news of Moriarty's escape from the police dragnet. Imagine for a moment that you are Sherlock Holmes in this situation. You have labored for months to bring off the arrest of a criminal mastermind. You have rubbed your hands in anticipation, and bragged to your best friend about bringing off "the greatest criminal trial of the century." Now you learn that the criminal in question is going to go free. Do you give up and run away in fear of Moriarty's revenge? Not if you are Sherlock Holmes, you don't!

Instead, Holmes made alternate plans. He knew that Moriarty would come after him, and he welcomed the thought. He meant to capture the Professor, to succeed where the police had failed. It was a dangerous plan, and he tried to get Watson out of the way in case something went wrong. But I don't think Holmes ever hesitated. His demeanor was hardly that of a hunted man. No, Holmes was in "exuberant spirits," and he spoke often in anticipation of "the capture or extinction of the most dangerous and capable criminal in Europe."

Holmes seemed so certain of the coming events that I cannot think he left the matter entirely up to Moriarty's desire for revenge. Think for a moment about the kind of information that Holmes might have hoped to obtain in Brussels, one of the financial centers of Europe. He was not likely to find evidence concerning, say, a murder that took place in London. I think Holmes probably obtained evidence of Moriarty's international financial dealings. There is little doubt that Moriarty was aware of where Holmes went and what he found there. Perhaps Holmes had learned of a vast fortune in stolen funds, secreted in Brussels by Moriarty against just such a crisis as had occurred in England. Would it be too far-fetched to imagine that Holmes might have obtained, for instance, the key to a safe deposit box containing a small fortune in jewels or high-denomination currency notes? Revenge is one thing, but Moriarty was not exactly a hot-headed type, and I think at the very least, he could have postponed his revenge until a more opportune moment. But

Moriarty's criminal operation had been shut down, and money was going to be tight for a while. If Sherlock Holmes had the key to his emergency source of funds, Moriarty would be sure to go after him.

It was Holmes who ensured that a meeting should take place between himself and the Professor. I think Holmes also decided upon the location for the meeting. Reichenbach Falls is a scary place, but that dead-end path had one advantage from Holmes's point of view: he could be sure to meet Moriarty there alone. Holmes had no way of knowing how many of Moriarty's henchmen had also escaped the police, or how many the Professor would bring along with him, but he knew that Moriarty would not play fair, and so he chose a place where he could keep the others at a distance. As an added dividend, the rocky overhangs and the constant mist from the falling water made it a difficult place for a sniper's bullet to find its mark. I am sure that Holmes had not forgotten the threat of air-guns, and he obviously selected his meeting spot wisely. Why do you think that Colonel Moran was reduced to throwing rocks at Holmes? And even then, Moran had to wait for Holmes to venture forth from his safe ledge into a more open area. It seems obvious that there was no clear shot to the ledge from any place of concealment where Moran could have waited - otherwise, it really would have been Holmes's final problem.

Imagine Moriarty's dismay when Moran was unable to kill Holmes according to plan. I think Moriarty may have panicked then. It was a fatal mistake for him to rush wildly at Holmes as he did; he should have known that his younger and stronger opponent would get the better of him in close combat. Or perhaps Moriarty did know precisely what he was doing, and he chose certain death over certain capture.

By then, I think, Holmes was weary of the struggle and ready enough to end the entire business by letting Moriarty choose his own fate. Without Moriarty, there would be no need for Holmes to give evidence at his trial. Without Moriarty, Holmes could make his own escape from the world of crime, at least for a three years' hiatus. There, you see? I didn't change the pictures at all, but only added my own shadings to them. And the beauty of it is, the outline is always there, always fresh, always ready for the application of our Canonical Crayolas as we choose. Now I wonder, is Cornflower Blue the right color for Dr. Watson's eyes ...

Story Info Pages for "Silver Blaze"

McMurdo's Camp, <https://mcmurdoscamp.wordpress.com/>

- First published: The Strand Magazine, Dec, 1892
- Time frame of story (known/surmised): Not given. Autumn, in the late 1880's likely.
- Holmes & Watson's living arrangements: Sharing bachelor quarters at 221B.
- Opening scene: Brief discussion as Holmes & Watson sat down to breakfast one morning about a case which was the topic of conversation through length and breadth of England, involving the disappearance of a race horse, Silver Blaze, which was the favorite for the Wessex Cup. The horse's trainer had apparently been tragically murdered.
- Client: On Tuesday evening, Holmes received telegrams from both Colonel Ross, the owner of the horse, and from Inspector Gregory, who was looking after the case, inviting his cooperation.
- Crime or concern: Disappearance of a race horse and apparent murder of the trainer.
- Villain: Straker, trainer had attempted to injure horse's tendon. Horse kicked trainer in head, killing him.
- Motive: Alter outcome of race, make money by laying against his own horse, to support his illicit girl-friend.
- Logic used to solve: Clue of bill found on Straker from London milliner Madame Lesurier led Holmes to suspect a girl-friend with expensive tastes.
 - Curried Mutton used to drug stable-guard made it an "inside job". It is beyond reason that an outsider could have made someone at the Straker household come up with the idea of serving a highly spiced meal that evening for his purposes. Therefore, someone in the household must have conceived the idea
 - Another indicator of an inside job was the dog in the stable that did not bark, as he would have if a stranger had approached.
 - Lamé sheep gave Holmes the idea of nicking a tendon to cause lameness. Someone had practiced on the sheep, using the small surgical knife found on Straker.
- Policemen: Inspector Gregory, an extremely competent officer, but not gifted with imagination.
- Holmes' fees: No mention, although Col. Ross did acknowledge he was under obligation to Holmes. Holmes had also made a bet on the next race and stood to win a little. It is possible he was helped with a little inside information.
- Transport: Holmes & Watson took train that morning from Paddington to Exeter, and on to Tavistock, which lies in the middle of Dartmoor. Upon arriving in the evening, they were picked up by Col. Ross and Inspector Gregory and were all seated in a comfortable landau, and rattled on to King's Pyland, Col. Ross' residence.
- Food: Curried mutton served by Strakers that night, and carried down to the lad guarding the stables. We believe this is the only Holmes case where the food played an important part in the mystery beyond providing nourishment.
- Drink: no mention
- Vices: The day before leaving for Dartmoor, Holmes smoked heavily, charging and recharging his pipe with the strongest black tobacco, and was absolutely deaf to any of Watson's questions or remarks.
 - During the train ride to Dartmoor, Watson lay back against the cushions, puffing at his cigar.
 - At the end, Holmes invited Col Ross to 221B to smoke a cigar.
- Other cases mentioned: none
- Notable Quotables:
 - Gregory: "Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?" Holmes: "To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time." Gregory: "The dog did nothing in the night-time." Holmes: "That was the curious incident."
 - "I made a blunder, my dear Watson — which is, I am afraid, a more common occurrence than anyone would think"
- Other interestings: Ross did not seem to have a high opinion of Holmes and his methods, and made a few remarks along those lines. Holmes reacted to this as he has been known to do, by being less than candid, or trying to make the uppity person look foolish.
 - About two miles distant across the moor from King's Pyland lay the larger training establishment of Mapleton, which belonged to Lord Backwater. Not known if there was more than one Lord Backwater in Britain at the time, but this Backwater was probably the friend of Lord St. Simon who recommended Holmes in NOBL.

Baker Street Elementary

Created by Joe Fay,
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Fay, Mason, & Mason

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I CAN'T BELIEVE THE SCHOOL PAPER DID NOT CREDIT ME FOR THE CHRONICLING OF YOUR MOST RECENT EFFORTS.



YOU MAY BE SORELY DISAPPOINTED, BUT ACCOLADES FOR YOUR WORK IS NOT THE ULTIMATE GOAL... YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON THE ACHIEVEMENT ITSELF.



EASY FOR YOU TO SAY... YOU'LL PROBABLY BE A HOUSEHOLD NAME BY THE TIME YOU PASS ON.



I BLUSH... I VOW, WATSON, I SHALL NOT FORGET THE LITTLE PEOPLE, SUCH AS YOURSELF, WHO HELPED ME ALONG THE WAY.



hmmm... YOU MAY NOT WANT ME MEMORIALIZING YOUR EXPLOITS... I MAY HAPPEN TO 'ACCIDENTALLY' POINT OUT YOUR FOIBLES, OR EVEN ATTRIBUTE SOME 'ERRACTIC BEHAVIORS' TO YOU.



GOOD IDEA... HUMANIZING YOUR IDOL WILL MAKE THE ADVENTURES MORE BELIEVABLE...



