

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 09, No. 09 - September, 2021
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star - founded April, 1970*



PLEASE NOTE: **October 03, Meeting** NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on October 03 at 1:00 pm CDT. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is "The Adventure of the Crooked Man".

Our Special Guest Speaker will be **Hal Glatzer**, who will discuss "Doyle's Dozen."

Bob Katz, BSI, will lead the discussion on the story "The Adventure of the Crooked Man.". The monthly quiz will also focus on this story.

We will cover topic 13 on "The Life and Times of Arthur Conan Doyle: The Travels of ACD," by **Carol Cavalluzzi**, ASH.

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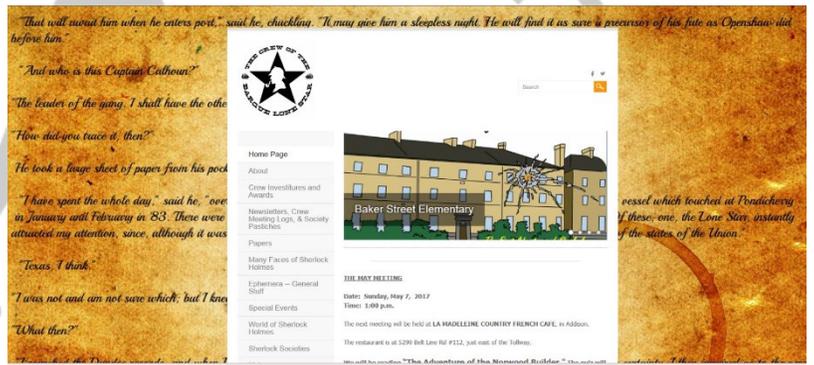
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SEPTEMBER 05 SUMMARY

Cindy Brown

There were 57 in attendance at this ZOOM meeting.

We began the meeting with an opening toast by Crew member **Kerry Entrekin**, who toasted the Pipes of the Canon (see page 4).

We then went directly to our first quiz on "The Reigate Squire." **Sharon Lowry** took first prize.

Our resident conversationalist, **Dr. Robert Katz**, BSI, then led a discussion of the story itself.

Ann Caddell, one of our more knowledgeable members, gave a very informative and entertaining presentation on "221b Baker Street - The Street, the Suite, the Sonnet."

We then conducted the lightning round quiz, the States and Provinces named in the Canon, which was won by **Cindy Brown**.

The closing toast, "The Crew of the Barque Lone Star," was given by our good friend and Deck Mate, **Rich Krisciunas**.

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

"A TOAST TO THE PIPES"

Kerry Entrekin



"It is quite a three pipe problem, and I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes", This well-known quote was spoken by Sherlock Holmes to Dr. John Watson in the case of *The Red-Headed League*.

Holmes, as we know, is a habitual tobacco smoker and owes his great power of deduction partially to this addiction. In the Canon, he used three pipes: a clay, a briar, and a cherry-wood.

First, his clay pipe is sometimes referred to as "black" or "oily" due to its turning black from over-use. This pipe was popular at the time because of the "pure", not flavored, smoke the pipe emitted.



Mentioned specifically six times in the Canon, below are three of the six references.

From *The Red-headed League*, "He curled himself up in his chair, with his thin knees drawn up to his hawk-like nose, and there he sat with his eyes closed and his black clay pipe thrusting out like the bill of some strange bird."

Then from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Watson writes "Through the haze I had a vague vision of Holmes in his dressing-gown coiled up in an armchair with his black clay pipe between his lips."

Next from *The Creeping Man*, Watson says, "As an institution I was like the violin, the shag tobacco, the old black pipe, the index books, and others perhaps less excusable."

Second, his briar pipe was made of briar wood that is



particularly well suited for pipe making due to its natural resistance to fire and its inherent ability to absorb moisture. This pipe was mentioned in only two of the adventures.

From *The Sign of Four*, "My practice has extended recently to the Continent", said Holmes, after a while, filling up his old briar-root pipe."

And from *The Man With the Twisted Lip* Watson writes, "In the dim light of the lamp I saw him sitting there, an old briar pipe between his lips, his eyes fixed vacantly upon the corner of the ceiling, the blue smoke curling up from him, silent, motionless, with the light shining upon his strong-set aquiline features."



Third, the cherry-wood pipe is named after the material being used and is mentioned exactly once in the Canon.

From *The Copper Beeches*, "You have erred, perhaps," he (Holmes) observed, taking up a glowing cinder with the tongs and lighting with it the long cherry-wood pipe which was wont to



replace his clay when he was in a disputatious rather than a

with this type of pipe? Because of William Gillette, an American actor who portrayed Holmes on the stage in the early 1900s.



Gillette wanted a pipe that was easily visible to the audience, but with a deep, pronounced bend that wouldn't block the audience's view of his face and would keep the smoke out of his eyes.

meditative mood."

So the obvious question that one might ask would be, "What about the calabash pipe?" as seen in our own society's logo.

In summary, Holmes' pipes provided him "the companion of his deepest meditation", where he achieved great concentration to solve his cases.

Nowhere in any of the 60 stories that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote was there a mention of a calabash. So how did Holmes become associated

So please raise your glasses to toast the pipes! May Holmes always find plenty of his tobacco supply in the toe of his Persian slipper.



THE GREATEST SHERLOCKIAN SONG YOU'VE NEVER HEARD

Karen Murdock – April, 2005

published in *Canadian Holmes*, Volume 28, no. 4
St. Jean Baptiste Day (Summer) 2005

One of the ineffable joys of working with primary sources is coming upon delightful discoveries while one is looking for something else entirely. Archives are treasure troves of such serendipity and the greatest Sherlockian archives in the world are at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. It was during one of my frequent trips to look something up in these collections that I discovered, quite by accident, what I think is the greatest Sherlockian song you've never heard.

Why have you never heard it? Well, the chances are that you have never even heard of it. Unless you were one of a handful of New Yorkers who went to see the play in 1965 or you are a completist Sherlockian collector who has sleuthed out the soundtrack, you have probably never heard of the song "Holmes and Watson" or the short-lived Broadway musical for which it was written, *Drat! The Cat!*

A musical spoof of late 19th century melodramas, *Drat! The Cat!* was produced on Broadway in 1965 but was set in New York City in the 1890s. The book and the lyrics were written by Ira Levin (born 1929), the music by Milton Schafer (born 1920). After 11 preview performances, the play opened on Broadway on October 10, 1965 at the Martin Beck Theatre at 302 West 45th Street.

"Drat! The Cat!" starred—and, if things had worked out differently, might have become the vehicle to song-and-dance stardom for—the then 19-year-old Lesley Ann Warren, who had studied ballet before she went into acting. She played Alice Van Guilder, the daughter of the richest man in town.

Alice, who is wicked but redeemable, livens up her boring debutante's life by dressing up at night in a skintight cat costume and prowling about New York City



stealing diamonds from others in her society set. The bumbling police force seems helpless to catch the cat burglar until rookie patrolman Bob Purefoy is put on the case. Bob, who is as inept as all the rest of the force, promptly falls in love with Alice, not realizing that she is The Cat.

The role of Bob Purefoy was played by Elliott Gould, then 27 and a veteran of several previous Broadway shows. His first duet with Alice was the sprightly song "Holmes and Watson." Neither Sherlock Holmes nor Doctor Watson appeared as a character in the play, but Alice evoked the London duo in suggesting, in song, that she might help

Bob to track down The Cat.

ALICE: Have you read the latest number of *Harper's Magazine*?
There's a story there by Conan Doyle.
It's about a new detective; he's marvelously keen,
And he has a chap, a doctor who's his foil.
Together they're second to none,
But together means two, sir, not one.

BOB (spoken): I'm afraid I never read *Harper's Magazine*.

ALICE: Sherlock Holmes has Doctor Watson;
Watson trots in back of Holmes.
All the plots that Holmes finds knots in
Watson jots in tomes.
'Cause it takes one to do the heavy brainwork,
One to do the more mundane work
One to say "It's elemen'try," one to say "A-MAZ-
ing!"

You be Holmes and I'll be Watson,
In high spots, in catacombs.
Any place the cat gavottes in
Watson trots with Holmes.
It's just as right as rain. We fit the format.

BOB: I the brain

ALICE: And I the doormat.

BOB: I will search

ALICE: And I'll be sentry.

TOGETHER: We'll be just aMAZing!

BOB: Lucky Holmes to have a Watson!

ALICE: "Thanks a lot," Sincerely, Holmes.
Poor old cat will soon feel small as
Hottentots and gnomes

TOGETHER: When he runs into Sherlock Holmes!

ALICE: And Doctor Watson!

As the rest of the play plays out, Bob stays loyal to his larcenous ladylove, even after he finds out about her alter ego as The Cat. He sings of his love for her, steps on her feet dancing with her, undergoes pain and humiliation for her sake, and eventually—this is musical comedy and this is how musical comedy *always* works out—wins her over so that she ceases her evil cat-burgling ways and marries her loyal patrolman, who has returned all the diamonds Alice has stolen, "even tiny baguettes." Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson are not mentioned again, but there are some nice waltzes, a lovely ballad, and a lively march before the finale, "Justice Triumphant."

"Drat! The Cat!" seemed to have a lot of the elements needed for success on Broadway—an original story, lively score, great performances by two fresh new talents, lots of song and dance, and, as one reviewer wrote, "some of the busiest and most ingenious scenery in town. Bridges, balconies, stairways appear and disappear as if by magic from above, below and the sides." The stage sets, another reviewer said, "fly, slide, emerge from trap doors in the

floor, drop, converge and do everything but sing 'Melancholy Baby'."

But somehow the stars never did align properly for this play and it became, as they say about airplanes that don't quite collide, a "near miss." Optimists might say it was a "near success." Looking back at it some years later, one critic wrote, "*Drat! The Cat!* almost made it, not that almost has ever been enough."

Reviews of the play by New York theatre critics, which appeared in newspapers the next day, were generally less than laudatory, although everybody liked Lesley Ann Warren and the highly kinetic stage sets designed by David Hays.

Walter Kerr was the most enthusiastic reviewer; eventually, in fact, he picked the music to "*Drat! The Cat!*" as his choice for Best Score of the Year. "The score grins," he wrote in his review in the *Herald Tribune*.

Other critics were less kind, however, and Broadway audiences stayed away in droves. (By the way, the most expensive ticket to the show—an Orchestra seat for an evening performance—went for \$9.90. The cheapest ticket—back row in the balcony for a matinee—sold for \$2.90. Just to give you an idea about how long ago 1965 really was.) *Drat! The Cat!* was forced to close on October 16, after only eight performances on Broadway.

Parts of the show lived on after its untimely demise. A few of the songs from "*Drat! The Cat!*" were recorded by artists not affiliated with the original play. This included a 45-rpm release of "He Touched Me" and "I Like Him" recorded by Barbra Streisand—who was, at the time, married to the show's leading man, Elliott Gould, and who had provided \$50,000 of the total \$500,000 in cash needed to mount the show. Jerry Vale waxed his rendition of "Deep in Your Heart." David Hays received a Tony nomination for his stage sets.

The play was nearly resuscitated several years after its demise, in Philadelphia, but after all the auditions had been held and the roles cast, the theater owner lost his funding. The play was revived in 1974 in a comeback slightly more successful than the original. It lasted for 24 performances in New York off-Broadway at the Bert Wheeler Theatre. Then went dark again.

The failure of the play seems to have had little negative impact upon the subsequent careers of the principle people associated with it. Ira Levin went on to write *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Stepford Wives*, *Boys From*

Brazil, and other successful novels, and four subsequent Broadway plays, including "Deathtrap," which ran for four-and-a-half years on the Great White Way. Elliott Gould went on to star in the movie "M*A*S*H" and many other films, earning an Academy Award nomination for *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* in 1969.

Lesley Ann Warner was also an Academy Award nominee, for *Victor/Victoria* in 1982. She appeared in many movies and television shows, but, after the failure of "Drat! The Cat!" she would not return to the Broadway stage for over thirty years, finally appearing in the musical revue "Dream" in 1997. She appeared in many movies and television shows, however, perhaps most memorably in "Victor/Victoria."

Charles Durning, who had the minor role of the Superintendent of Police in "Drat! The Cat!" went on to a very busy career in theatre, television, and the movies. The soundtrack of "Drat! The Cat!" was finally put out on a vinyl record in 1984 and recorded with a different cast on a compact disk in 1997 (see "Hearing the Music").

However, the play largely disappeared from public awareness and, as far as I know, the song "Holmes and Watson" never became widely known to the Sherlockian community, one group which might have embraced it with great enthusiasm. I am pleased to think that I might be the vehicle whereby a "lost" Sherlockian song is found and given to a new generation of Sherlockians. I hope, and I expect, that you will like it.

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THANKS

Many thanks to the research librarians at the University of Minnesota for tracking down much helpful information for me and teaching me about books and online databases I had never known existed before I started to write this article. Very special thanks to Ira Levin and Milton Schafer for graciously allowing me to reprint their charming and tuneful song.

Karen Murdock (who, you might remember, gave a Zoom talk to the Crew in December 2020) is finishing up her book on figures of speech in the Sherlockian Canon. She has identified 46 classical figures of speech, from alliteration to zeugma, in the Holmes stories. Her book will identify, list, and discuss each of these figures. She hopes it will be in print in the new year.

VICTORIAN ENGLAND COMES TO TERMS WITH A NATIONAL HABIT

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

Opium is mentioned in six cases in the Canon: in a list of Holmes' knowledge of poisons in *A Study in Scarlet*; a reference to its use among Indian rebels in *The Sign of the Four*; its use as a sedative in "Silver Blaze," "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge," and "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane;" and once as an addictive substance in "The Man with the Twisted Lip."

These references reflect the substance's varied and pervasive uses in Victorian England. Class and racial bias regarding the drug's administration and practices finally led to its re-classification as a dangerous narcotic following WWI.

The first known references to opium occurred more than five-thousand years ago. The Sumerians are recognized as the first cultivators and users of the "joy plant." The practice then passed to the Assyrians and the Babylonians before it spread to the Egyptians. More than 3000 years ago, the drug entered Europe. It disappeared from the continent during the Holy Inquisition (from the 1300s to 1500s), only to be re-established by the Portuguese.

Thanks to Alexander the Great, opium made it to Persia and India, and Portuguese merchants carried the practice of smoking opium to China in the 1600s. Following the spread of recreational opium use in that country, the British East India Company established a monopoly on the import of Indian opium to China in the 1700s, and expanded the trade in the 1800s following defeat of the Chinese in two "Opium Wars." (1)

When the drug was re-introduced to Europe, it was fashioned into pills or mixed with other substances and sold as remedies for a variety of ailments for all ages (from babies to the elderly).

By the 1800s, Victorians could purchase opium-based products not only from a chemist, but also

barbers, tobacconists, stationers, and even wine merchants. (2) The most popular form was laudanum, a tincture of 10% opium mixed with alcohol and herbs. Sometimes referred to as the "aspirin of the nineteenth century," consumers could buy twenty to twenty-five drops for a penny, making it very affordable.

While some effort was made to restrict laudanum's availability to chemist shops with the passage of the 1868 Pharmacy Act, no reduction in sales occurred because chemists were not limited in the amount sold. (3)

Class distinctions, however, separated the image of the drug and its use. Among the working-class, it was viewed as a stimulant and a replacement for drink. For upper- and middle-class families, laudanum use might be a habit, but was not considered addictive.

The pervasive use of the drug, however, was related as much to self-medication among the middle-class as any recreational use by the lower classes. (4)

While medicinal use was considered acceptable (even though many users showed signs of addiction), those in the lower classes, and especially those from Asia, who smoked opium were viewed in a much different light.

Chinese sailors who settled in the Limehouse area introduced the practice, but their numbers were small (less than 600 permanently living in London in 1891 and representing only about 10% of all sailors coming ashore).

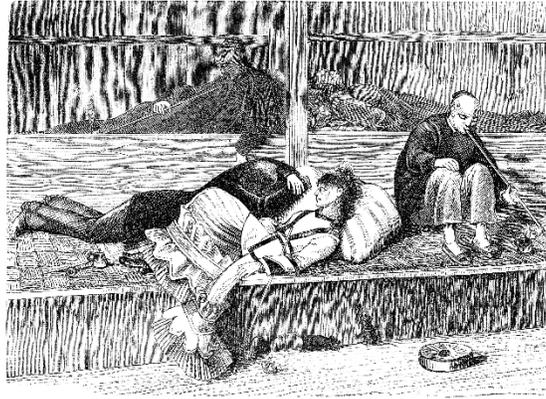
While popular culture described the places where recreational smoking occurred—the famed "opium dens"—as dark and dangerous spaces, contemporary researchers indicate very few of these "dens" actually existed and were usually one room attached to another business. (5)



The description of such a den provided in the Holmes tale represents the image perpetuated by a number of writers, including Thomas De Quincey (*Confessions of an Opium Eater*), Oscar Wilde (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*), and Charles Dickens (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*).

Similarly, missionaries in China provided a comparable portrayal of such dens in that country. (6) The depiction of these places as decadent and associated with the criminal underworld directly led to an increase in racism against Asians in England and elsewhere. (7)

A variety of forces came together in the early 1900s to create a shift in attitudes toward opiates. Various medical groups and the press reported on overdose deaths and the growing number of middle-class addicts and reframed the issue as a matter of public health.



Additional concern that working-class users and foreigners were corrupting the middle class led to further restrictions on opiate use. (8)

With the advent of WWI, public alarm over soldiers' addictions to opiates and other drugs created an emergency, and for the first time, strict regulations were introduced to control such substances,

particularly those smuggled in from the Far East.

The Dangerous Drug Act of 1920 made these controls permanent and reflected shifts in attitudes regarding both the drug and the user. (9)

By the time Watson goes to the opium den in search of Isa Whitney, the good doctor recognized his patient's habit as an addiction. It was another fifteen years, however, before any governmental regulations recognized it as well.

- 1) <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/heroin/etc/history.html>
- 2) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/representations-of-drugs-in-19th-century-literature>
- 3) <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Opium-in-Victorian-Britain/>
- 4) (4) Virginia Berridge, "Victorian Opium Eating: Responses to Opiate Use in Nineteenth-Century England," *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Summer, 1978), pag
- 5) e 447.
- 6) <https://theses.whiterose.ac.uk/11176/1/thesisfinal.pdf>
- 7) Xavier Paulès, "High-class opium houses in Canton during the 1930s," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch*, Vol. 45 (2005), page 145.
- 8) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/representations-of-drugs-in-19th-century-literature>
- 9) <https://daily.jstor.org/how-opium-use-became-a-moral-issue/>
- 10) Berridge, "Victorian Opium Eating," page 461.

"COPPER" BOTTOM?

David Richardson, The Holmes-Watson Report – March, 2003

Consider the stories which, in 1894, marked the beginning and the end of Dr Watson's shorter accounts of the exploits of his friend Sherlock Holmes: "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Final Problem." The first was written when Watson supposed Holmes to be still alive - indeed, the manuscript for it rested in the offices of *The Strand Magazine* on the very night referred to in the second. If the first tale wears the mask of comedy, the second unmistakably wears that of tragedy. (If one is the alpha of the short cases, the other is the omega - and there were then only 24 of them.)

It is also clear that Watson intended that FINA would be his final words on Holmes, for in addition to his melancholy opening words ("It is with a heavy heart ..."), he has glossed Holmes with the phrase "the best and the wisest man whom I have ever known," which echoes Plato's final words about Socrates in the *Phaedo*.

Consider also that Holmes is 34 when the actions of SCAN commence. The Victorian attitude toward age was probably closer to that of Dante Alighieri's than our current one of perpetual youth, so Holmes might well have been beginning to reflect on the fact that he was nearing life's mid-course (halfway through our allotted three score and ten, as Dante remarks at the beginning of his Infernal journey), so that his small setback with respect to Irene might be expected to induce (in himself) a certain "what's it all about, Sherlock" reaction.

Indeed, we seem to see just such a reaction in "The Copper Beeches" (which I, and many others, date to 1890, when Holmes would have just passed that midpoint), and in which he somewhat dejectedly says to Watson:

...the days of the great cases are past. Man, or at least criminal man, has lost all enterprise and originality. As to my own little practice, it seems to be degenerating into an agency for recovering lost lead pencils and giving advice to young ladies from

boarding-schools. I think that I have touched bottom at last, however. This note I had this morning marks my zero-point, I fancy 1.

It must have been with no little sense of irony that Watson wrote this, for he knew by then that Holmes had perished at the hands of a criminal man of remarkable enterprise and originality. As Watson was writing this tale (COPP) as a substitute for the one which he would eventually write to describe the events in "The Final Problem," the reference to a nadir is perhaps understandable.

The first four tales were evidently told (if not published) before the events of late April and early May which ended so tragically for Watson (not to mention Holmes). And yet the tone of the remainder - up until the last one - remain remarkably uniform, with no hint appearing in them of what Watson must have known he was going to have to relate sooner or later.

It is a tribute to his skill that he was able to sustain this tone, and a greater tribute to his judgment that he realized that, if he were able to do so, it would make the force of the final revelation all the greater, and the greater would be his tribute to his lost friend. Let us consider (with one significant omission, which I shall deal with later) the cases which Watson reports to us from the period between our alpha and omega.

They are, in roughly chronological order:

1888: IDEN STOC NAVA *SECO* CROO

1889: BOSC TWIS ENGR FIVE *DYIN* BLUE

1890: COPP REDH

[underlining indicates stories written before events of FINA; italics indicate stories told after return]

Now of these, IDEN, BOSC, and REDH were already in the pipeline, so to speak, and if we omit the, COPP becomes the last written case which occurs before Holmes comes calling that April eve. (I wonder if this

was in T.S. Elliot's mind when he said "April is the cruellest month"?)

If in fact COPP was substituted for FINA, it seems quite possible that it might well have been selected for this role precisely because Watson remembered Holmes making the remark elicited by Violet Hunter's note, and, perhaps in hindsight, realized that it had some significance for the events which followed.

Although "The Redheaded League" is written with no hint of Moriarty, REDH is a suspiciously Moriartian crime, for how would John Clay have gotten wind of all that French gold waiting to be (elaborately) burgled? This bears the earmarks of an intelligence-gathering organization and may have been, for all we know, the very case which put Holmes directly onto Moriarty's trail.

Consider the cases after the first three - STUD, SIGN, SCAN - which Watson has reported from this period. With the singular exceptions of NAVA and SECO (which occur quite close in time, if not in publication), they are, one must admit, rather mundane.

They have their interests, of course, but one must admit that in terms of larger significance they come closer to lead pencil recovery than affairs of state. When one recalls that Holmes had, just prior to the events of SCAN, performed some services for the reigning family of Holland, and reflects that the story of working for the French government related in FINA was clearly a ruse, one has to wonder if Holmes's career had not, in fact, fallen on hard times.

Watson attributes the paucity of cases from 1890 that he records to Holmes not coming to him because their relations were becoming more distant, but it might just have been because he - that is to say, Holmes - was being consulted more infrequently himself.

Let us look a bit closer at those two non-insignificant cases which Watson reported. In one Holmes recovered a stolen treaty for a somewhat inept relative of a Prime Minister, and in the second he recovered a letter injudiciously given away by the wife of the Foreign Secretary. I have the distinct impression that in neither case was Holmes's actual role fully explained to the relevant ministers.

Governments are strange creatures (and English governments often the strangest of all), and it is not beyond all imagining that, not fully understanding what Holmes was doing for them, the word went out that government matters were no longer to be referred to "that Holmes chap."

Holmes would, in such circumstances, have felt a "malign force" intervening, not in the London underworld, but in his world. (Do not worry - I am not about to suggest that Holmes invented Moriarty as a way to get back into the good graces of Her Majesty's Government.)

It is not impossible that, facing a reduction in his caseload, Holmes might well have turned to tidying up some of those stacks of manuscripts that Watson complained about in MUSG, and in the course of reviewing his notes (for Holmes, I suspect, would likely stop to read his notes before filing them away) in such a concentrated manner, would have begun to notice some strange features which hinted at "some deep organizing power."

He told Watson he had sensed the power "for some years," but this could be no more than the reading back into memory of interpretations recently made (rather akin to the way we will say of some unfortunate event "I knew something would happen" when in fact, at the time, we knew no such thing).

Moriarty was, of course, there to be legitimately discovered, and the combined effects of the criminal trials which ensued from Holmes's investigations into Moriarty's doings, combined with his near-miraculous return from the dead, must clearly have placed him back into the Government's favour, so that when sensitive plans were stolen, an unsuitable marriage needed to be prevented, or a German spy-ring broken up, Holmes would be called in, and Watson was able to record (once he had been permitted to publish again) that Holmes was at his very peak in the year 1895.

The omitted case

The case which I omitted from my listing was, of course, *The Valley of Fear*. This is a controversial case because while it is given as occurring "in the late

eighties," Watson displays a knowledge of Moriarty even though he clearly states that he has "never" heard of him in April of 1891 on the occasion of Holmes's visit which initiated the events of FINA.

Although Baring-Gould held that Watson withheld his knowledge of Moriarty in order not to interrupt FINA's narrative thrust, I have felt that Watson's profession of ignorance was true, and that he simply inserted Inspector MacDonald's visit into his narration of VALL because Holmes told him about it later, as he was not present when it took place. . .

However, if our contention is that Holmes did not discover Moriarty's existence until *after* the nadir recorded in COPP (in the early spring of 1890), then we seem to be faced with the unpleasant reality that Watson would have been ignorant of Moriarty's existence too, and been unaware that he played any role in the Birlstone tragedy at all.

We seem to be faced with two unattractive alternatives. Either a) VALL did not occur "in the late eighties" or b) the conversation with Inspector MacDonald which opens it did not open it, and was worked into the case narration later.

Simply moving the case to 1890 will not work - it occurs in January, and would still precede COPP. It would have to be moved to 1891, and Watson has clearly stated that he did not see Holmes in the winter of 1890 and spring of 1891. We are thus forced to ask: if not a note from one of Moriarty's minions, how did Holmes come to take an interest in the Birlstone tragedy?

A deceptively simple answer is readily to hand: Inspector MacDonald came by to enlist his aid, just as

he does in the narrative in VALL. But Watson, being married at this time, is unlikely to have been present, and would have had to be summoned to accompany Holmes to the crime scene. But this leaves us with no Porlock, no mysterious cryptogram, and no pawky humor.

All must be laid on so Watson can have some reason to relate Inspector MacDonald's remarks on his visit to Professor Moriarty (which, on my reckoning, would have occurred after the events of COPP). This seems a bitter pill to swallow (and no doubt some will choose not to); is there some way we can sugar-coat it?

What seems to have happened here is that Watson has conflated two conversations that Holmes had with Inspector MacDonald: the one about Birlstone, and the one about Moriarty.

Why would Watson have added the Moriarty conversation to the Birlstone one?

What is the Inspector's attitude toward Holmes's claims about Moriarty?

Isn't it pretty much "pish, tish, Mr Holmes, you're imagining things"? Watson has seized this opportunity to show us the reaction Holmes got from the authorities when he first began to investigate Professor Moriarty.

It was the coincidental involvement of the same Inspector in both matters which gave him this chance to show his readers some of the obstacles Holmes faced when he attempted to draw attention to Moriarty's activities, and if he has advanced Holmes's knowledge of Moriarty ahead of its true acquisition, this is a small price to pay for a fine example of Watson's pawky humor.

(1) *This is one of those cases in which Watson, although married, seems to be making an extended stay at Baker Street (perhaps due to the absence of his peripatetic wife), and it is evident from his comments in the days after Ms Hunter departs that Holmes seems to have considerable free time and to be thinking more about this minor case than a busy schedule would permit.*

HERLOCK SHOLMES - The Munition Mystery!

Charles Hamilton (Peter Todd), February 19, 1916, *The Greyfriars Herald*

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

Chapter 1

Herlock Sholmes was poring over a letter when I came into our sitting-room at Shaker Street. His feet rested upon the mantelpiece, and his famous dressing-gown hung in graceful folds about his waist. That he was deep in thought I could see at a glance, for he was smoking three pipes instead of the usual two—a habit when he had to deal with some problem that required intense concentration of mind. He laid down the letter and glanced at me with a smile.

"You are late down this morning, my dear Jotson," he remarked.

"Sholmes!" I exclaimed.

"It is a fact, is it not?"

"I admit it, Sholmes, but—" He laughed.

"Your amazement is amusing, Jotson. Yet have you not told me that you have studied my methods?"

"To the best of my poor ability, Sholmes," I replied, somewhat nettled. "But in this instance I confess that I do not follow your reasoning. I should be glad to know how you made that deduction."

"I have no objection to explaining, my dear fellow. To you, at least, I do not desire to make a mystery. That you are down late this morning I deduced from a casual examination of the clock."

"The clock!" I could not help exclaiming.

"The clock, Jotson. Look at it yourself, and tell me what conclusion you draw."

"I confess it tells me nothing." Herlock Sholmes yawned.

"My dear Jotson, it is perfectly simple. The hour hand indicates nine, the minute hand rests at three. Taken in conjunction, these two facts indicate — as it is not an American clock — that it is now a quarter past nine."

"True!"

"Your usual breakfast hour is half-past eight; you are, therefore, three-quarters of an hour past your usual time. From such simple facts, Jotson, I deduced that you were later than usual this morning."

I regarded my amazing friend with speechless admiration.

"But to come to more serious matters," said Sholmes, "I have received this letter — a most peculiar case, Jotson. I should be glad of your opinion."

"You flatter me, Sholmes."

"Not at all, my dear fellow. 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,' you

know! A very interesting case, Jotson. You are aware that a large number of munition factories have been established in the country. Our far-seeing statesmen, having consulted the very best expert military opinion, have now decided that cannons are more formidable to the enemy when supplied with shells. Naturally, there was some hesitation at first, but this opinion is now pretty generally adopted, and the result is that munition factories have sprung up all over the country. Gentlemen of all trades and professions—even engineers, as I hear—have been appointed as inspectors of munition works. The work is going on famously, but there appears to be trouble at this particular place" — he referred to the letter — "at Slowcome."

"What has happened, Sholmes?" I asked, interested.

"The details are curious enough. It appears that the



factory at Slowcome is turning out big shells. But of late a considerable number of these shells have been found to be filled with water."

"Water, Sholmes?"

"Water!" he replied. "I know little of engineering, Dotson, I admit — scarcely more, than a munition inspector—but it appears that a shell filled with water is useless for military purposes. The inspector in this especial factory is a very honest and reliable gentleman — a dairyman by profession. He passed the shells as satisfactory, unfortunately having had no training in the business. Now, my dear Jotson, what is your opinion?"

"German treachery!" I replied at once. "Undoubtedly the Germans have discovered our artillery is, at last, to be supplied with ammunition, and they have taken measures accordingly."

Sholmes smiled.

"Ah, Jotson, have I not warned you against obvious theories?" he said.

"True! But in this case——"

"You may be right, Jotson. *Nous verrons!*" said Sholmes, rising. "If you would care to come down to Slowcome with me to-day, we shall see. I must investigate on the spot."

Ten minutes later, the 7:63 from Euston was bearing us rapidly towards Slowcome.

Chapter 2

Herlock was very thoughtful during the journey. I could hardly extract a word from him.

As a matter of fact, I felt decidedly taken with my own theory, and I fancied, for once, that even Sholmes, in his contempt for the most obvious solution of a problem, had overlooked the explanation which had occurred to me. The filling of the shells with water rendered them useless for military purposes, and to whom could such an act be attributed save a German spy? We alighted at Slowcome, and walked to the gigantic factory. Sholmes was still very thoughtful.

"You are satisfied with your theory, Jotson?" he asked me, with a smile.

"Quite!" I replied, with conviction.

"But the inspector!" he said.

"Perhaps a German, or in the pay of the enemy," I replied. "How can he be trustworthy, Sholmes, when he has passed as satisfactory, shells filled with water?"

"My dear Jotson, the inspector concerned is a milkman well known in Slowcome, and of the highest character."

"You have formed a theory, Sholmes?"

He frowned.

"I do not deal in theories, Jotson. I have, I believe, deduced

the correct conclusion from the known facts. But we shall see."

We entered the factory. We were greeted cordially by the manager, who bore the old British name of Von Gollop. Machinery was at work on all sides turning out the shells that were to crush the Huns to the very dust — at some date at present unfixed. Sholmes looked round him with his usual inscrutable smile.

"I should be glad to see the inspector," he remarked.

"He is here," said Mr. Von Gollop. "I will send for heem."

Sholmes shook hands with Mr. Milcoe, the munition inspector. I noted that he regarded Mr. Milcoe very keenly, and nodded as if satisfied.

"Kindly wait for me in the office, Jotson," he said.

Somewhat puzzled, I entered the manager's office and waited. Sholmes' whole interest seemed to be centred in Mr. Milcoe, the inspector, though he had himself told me the gentleman was of the highest character. Indeed, as I learned later. Mr. Milcoe had a very wide connection in Slowcome as a family dairyman, and served the best families with milk. Mr. Milcoe was making his tour of inspection, and, to my amazement, Herlock Sholmes was shadowing him through the munition factory. Did he, after all, suspect Milcoe of treachery? I was puzzled and impatient. I settled down at last to read the newspaper, perusing with great satisfaction the three

hundred and seventy-fifth epoch-making speech of the great and revered Mr. Hashquick.

I had scarcely read more than the first ten thousand words, however, when Sholmes entered, smiling.

"We have time to catch our train, Jotson," he said.

"Sholmes, you are not finished?"

"I am finished."

"You have discovered——"

"I have."

"And it was not a German spy?"

He laughed.

"Nothing of the kind, my dear Jotson. Come!"

As we left the munition works Mr. Milcoe stopped us, and shook hands with my amazing friend, with a look of the deepest gratitude.

"I shall never forget this, Mr. Sholmes," he said brokenly. "It was, as you so wonderfully deduced, merely absent-mindedness."

"Exactly!" said Sholmes.

"In future every care shall be exercised," said Mr. Milcoe, wringing my friend's hand. "Mr. Sholmes, you have perhaps saved

the Empire — not to mention the Alhambra and the Coliseum. For if the war should last more than seventy-nine years, the result may easily depend upon the supply of shells from Slowcome. Bless you, Mr. Sholmes."

I could scarcely contain my impatience till we were seated in the London express. Sholmes was elated, as I could see by the way he tossed off a swig of cocaine from his flask.

"Sholmes," I exclaimed, "in the name of wonder——"

"You are mystified, Jotson?"

"Unutterably! You have discovered who placed the water in the shells?"

"Assuredly."

"By whose hand, then, was the foul work done?"

"By Mr. Milcoe's."

"Sholmes! Then he is a traitor?"

"Nothing of the sort, my dear Jotson," smiled Sholmes. "He is a milkman."

"Sholmes!"

"In forming your theory, my dear Jotson, you left out of consideration the cardinal fact the munition inspector was a milkman by profession. It did not

escape me, however. I shadowed Mr. Milcoe in the factory. He is a dairyman of the highest character — but slightly absent-minded. Old habits are strong, Jotson. Mr. Milcoe was a slave to habit. Taken suddenly from his business as a milkman, placed in a position of a munition inspector, his habits could not change so suddenly as his occupation. He had been accustomed to filling his milk-pails with water. Milk-pails were no longer at hand. But the shells were there. From force of habit, he filled the shells with water. Knowing nothing of the nature or manufacture of shells, he was naturally unaware that such an operation rendered them useless. Now that I have put him on his guard, however, he is not likely to make this error again."

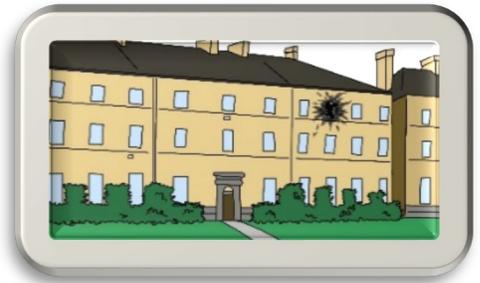
"Wonderful!" I exclaimed. "But why, my dear Sholmes, should a milkman be appointed inspector of munition factory?"

"That is easily explained, my dear Jotson. It is probable that there were no butchers or bakers or candlestick-makers available!"

THE END

Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason



Baker Street Elementary
Number 357 – 09/12/2021

Fay, Mason & Mason

WHAT MAKES ICE FLOAT ON TOP OF
WATER, SUCH AS ICEBERGS IN THE
OCEAN ?



THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF HOLMES AND WATSON

EASY, ICE
MISSES
BEING
WATER...

SO IT RISES OUT OF THE
WATER... WHEN IT GETS
CLOSER TO THE SUN, IT
MELTS BACK TO WATER...



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