



EXPLORATIONS



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our summer hiatus has come to a close with the meeting of the Study Group on Sept. 23rd. I hope everyone had a great summer and we're all ready to move into our too short fall which we all know turns quickly to winter. To paraphrase Mr. Holmes, when meeting Henry Baker in "The Blue Carbuncle," it would seem, or so we hope, that our circulations are more adapted for winter than for summer here in Minnesota.

We have much to report since the last issue of *Explorations*. I'd like to welcome two new members to our ranks. Cate Pfeifer and James Maertens have both joined The Norwegian Explorers and I hope we'll all have a

chance to meet and greet them at one of our upcoming events.

Bob Schultz BSI ("The Gloria Scott" 2002), a member of The Norwegian Explorers, passed away on Sept. 7, 2006. Bob was a long-time resident of Vermont and was active in Sherlockian circles since the 1940s. He received his investiture in 2002, the same year he was awarded the Morley-Montgomery Award for his article "Upon the Dating of Bloodstains." He was a member of The Goose Club of the Alpha Inn as well as The Explorers.

Dick Sveum, President of The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections, has set

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In this issue we are happy to welcome Tim Reich as a contributor to *Explorations*. I hope that many of you will enjoy a vicarious visit to a fascinating exhibit in Edinburgh through Tim's excellent review and photos. I certainly did. We also print letters to the editor from Stanton Berg on firearms in the Canon, Ruth Berman on early performances in Minneapolis of plays by William Gillette, Conan Doyle and others, and Steve Schier on an upcoming performance of Gillette's best-known play. Bob Brusnic contributes a drama review, and Phil Bergem resumes his Internet Explorations and informs us about the wealth of Sher-

lockian and Doylean materials on the open shelves of Wilson Library at the U. of M. To round things off, Charles Clifford reports on the Sherlock Holmes Study Group sessions before and after our summer hiatus

Letters to the editor or other submissions for *Explorations* are always welcome. Please email items in Word or plain text format to john.bergquist@gmail.com ❖

John Bergquist, BSI
Editor, Explorations





“The annual dinner for The Norwegian Explorers will be held on Dec. 7, 2006 at the Minneapolis Golf Club.”

FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

the date for the annual meeting of the Friends for Monday, October 23, 2006 at 7 PM at the Andersen Library. Paul Martin, MD, BSI and past president of The Norwegian Explorers will deliver the Keynote address, “Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle: A Self Portrait.” All members of the Explorers are welcome at this meeting, and notification will be sent out closer to the date.

The annual dinner for The Norwegian Explorers will be held on Dec. 7, 2006. Our thanks go to members Wade and Mary Manthie for reserving the date at, as we can report “back by popular demand,” the Minneapolis Golf Club, 2001 Flag Ave. S. in St. Louis Park. We are very pleased to report that our speaker at the dinner this year will be the award winning mystery writer Sujata Massey. (You can find out more information about Sujata at her website <<http://interbridge.com/sujata/>>.) She is the author of nine mystery novels featuring her multicultural character Rei Shimura. The child of a Japanese father and an American mother, Rei has adventures that take place in both Japan and the United States. Sujata’s books are *The Salaryman’s Wife* (1997), Winner of the Agatha Award for Best First Novel; Nominee, Barry and Macavity Awards for Best First Mystery and Anthony Award for Best Paperback Original; *Zen Attitude* (1998), Nominee, Edgar and Anthony Awards for Best Paperback Original; *The Flower Master* (1999), Winner of the Macavity Award for Best Novel, Nominee, Agatha Award for Best Novel; *The Floating Girl* (2000), Nominee, Agatha Award for Best Novel; *The Bride’s Kimono* (2001), Nominee, Agatha Award for Best Novel; *The Samurai’s Daughter* (2003), Nominee, Simon & Schuster - Mary Higgins Clark Award; *The Pearl Diver* (2004), Nominee, Agatha Award for Best Novel; *The Typhoon Lover* (2005); and *Girl in a Box* (2006). Pat Frovarp and Gary Schulz of Once Upon a Crime have agreed to have Sujata’s books on hand at the annual dinner.

Plans for the next Norwegian Explorers’ conference, “Victorian Secrets and Edwardian

Enigmas” are progressing nicely. The conference will be held July 6 - 8, 2007 at the Elmer L. Andersen Library. We have a number of confirmed speakers including Michael Kean BSI, Dana Richards, Sue Vizoskie BSI, Gary Thaden, and Mike Eckman. We know that at least one member of the trio of editors for the upcoming book about Conan Doyle’s letters to his mother will be present as well, and it promises to be another great symposium. I’d like to thank my co-chair Dick Sveum and our committee members Gary Thaden, Phil Bergem, John Bergquist, Pj Doyle, Mike Eckman, Tom Gottwalt and Tim Johnson for their hard work and great imaginations. You’ll be hearing a lot about the conference during the next nine months.

I’d like to welcome a new contributor to *Explorations*. Included in this issue is Tim Reich’s article about his trip to Edinburgh. I hope to see many of you at the study group and the meetings on Oct. 23 and Dec. 7. ❖

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

THE AGONY COLUMN

“I am fairly familiar with all forms of secret writings, and am myself the author of a trifling monograph upon the subject, in which I analyze one hundred and sixty separate ciphers.” [THE DANCING MEN].

“Because there are many ciphers which I would read as easily as I do the apocrypha of the agony column - such crude devices amuse the intelligence without fatiguing it.” [THE VALLEY OF FEAR]

— Sherlock Holmes

Tony Gaffney from the UK reports on a new book of interest to Sherlockians: *The Agony Column Codes & Ciphers* by Jean Palmer, available in e-book or paperback from Authors on Line or Amazon.co.uk. The book is a compilation of over 1,000 secret messages from various 19th century newspapers – the very ones Holmes refers to in the above quotations.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"THE PROBLEM OF THOR BRIDGE," REVISITED

In our Spring issue, Charles Clifford reviewed the April 15, 2006 Study Group discussion of "The Problem of Thor Bridge." Explorer Stanton Berg, a nationally recognized expert in forensics, wrote to the editor expressing his disappointment that the review made no mention of firearms. Stan wrote,

"The focus of the story is on how an attempt was made to disguise a suicide to look like a homicide and the manipulation of a firearm to attain that end.... Being my forensic career was focused on firearms I was ... disappointed that no mention of firearms, guns, pistols, revolvers, or the forensic aspects of suicide and homicide appeared in the review.

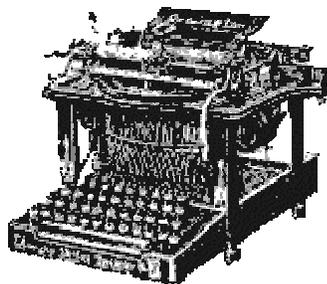
"If you have an interest, please go to my web site and review one of my papers on the 'Firearms of Sherlockian London.' The paper deals with all stories in the Canon that relate to Watson or Holmes and their use of firearms. My web site is:

<<http://hometown.aol.com/forensicb/myhomepage/Index.html>>

The last link in the 'Related Links' group at the bottom of the page is entitled: 'The Firearms of Sherlock Holmes and Victorian London.' If you click on this link you will find a discussion of 'The Problem of Thor Bridge' about 3/4ths of the way through the article and in part II. In particular I think you may be interested in the two modern day instances of someone trying to disguise suicide as a homicide in a manner similar to 'Thor Bridge.' One case was reported in June 1988 and the other in June 1995." ❖

Stanton O. Berg
Forensic Firearms Consultant

We in the Explorers are fortunate to have so many knowledgeable specialists in our ranks, Stan among them. Although Stan has been unable to attend recent Explorer functions because of the serious illness of his wife, June, we thank him for sharing his expertise via his nicely illustrated website. – Ed.



CONANICAL BURTON

I have a couple of footnotes to add to Andrew Malec's interesting article in the *Norwegian Explorers 2005 Christmas Annual* concerning William Gillette's letter to Richard Burton a about Frederic Dorr Steele.

Andrew quotes a 1929 letter

Burton wrote to Gillette about having enjoyed his acting for many years. It is pleasant to note that Burton could have seen one of Gillette's performances here in the Twin Cities – Gillette brought his 1906 play *Clarice* through here during the week of Jan. 28-Feb. 2, 1907 (a half-week each to St. Paul and then Minneapolis). The earlier plays that Burton singled out as his favorites in Gillette's career (starting with Gillette's first play, *The Professor*) Burton would not have seen here, however, since the article states that Burton did not arrive at the University of Minnesota until 1898. Gillette brought *The Professor* on tour to the Twin Cities in 1883 and *The Private Secretary* (which Burton abbreviates as "The Secretary") in 1885 and 1886, but Burton was still living in the East when he would have seen those plays.

Of the other plays by Gillette that Burton "reveled in," *The Legal Wreck* was not performed here. *Too Much Johnson* and "the great war plays, *Held by the Enemy* and *Secret Service*" were performed here by the "second" companies, without Gillette. Burton could have seen some of those productions here, but he speaks of seeing Gillette in them, and those had to be productions he saw elsewhere, probably in New York. It was Gillette's decision in 1929 to bring back his *Sherlock Holmes* that prompted Burton's letter to him. As with the other plays, Burton probably saw Gillette in *Sherlock Holmes* in New York. It was only in 1932 that Gillette played his most famous role here for the first time. (Before that, his *Sherlock Holmes* had played here, but without Gillette, in 1901, 1902, 1903, early and late 1906, 1909, and 1915.)

Burton saw another play with a Sherlockian connection here in town, when Sir Henry Irving toured the United States. In Min-

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"We in the Explorers are fortunate to have so many knowledgeable specialists in our ranks, Stanton Berg among them."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (CONT.) CONANICAL BURTON (CONT.)



"In 1932 [William] Gillette played his most famous role [in Minneapolis] for the first time."

neapolis, Irving played the one-act *Nance Oldfield* paired with *The Bells*, a Napoleonic evening of Arthur Conan Doyle's one-act *Waterloo* paired with Sardou's *Madame Sans-Gene*, and Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. (The bill was slightly different in St. Paul, with *King Charles I* and *Louis XI* instead of *Nance Oldfield* and *The Bells*.) Burton reviewed each of the three Minneapolis productions in page-one articles for the *Minneapolis Tribune*, covering the Napoleonic evening – Irving as the old soldier Corporal Brewster remembering the Napoleonic wars, and as Napoleon in *Madame Sans-Gene* (with Ellen Terry as the title character) – under the headline, "Another Crowded House at the Metropolitan" (Dec. 28, 1901). Burton commented: "*Waterloo* raises the interesting question of the relation of fiction to the stage: one particularly pertinent just now, when every other romance is being licked into so-called dramatic shape often without the least excuse. Conan Doyle's story, upon which the little piece is based, is a vivid character sketch, done with art and atmosphere, and touched with pathos. It stands or falls with the character of the old French soldier from the ancient ashes of whose memory flare up under a certain stimulus, the fires of military glory and quenchless patriotism, and whose death is a warrior's apotheosis. Is a character sketch with necessarily so little of dramatic envisagement good stuff for the purposes of the playhouse? By all means, when it introduces a longer piece, when it is so skillfully manufactured, and above all, when a dominant individuality is its pivot. With these conditions, I prefer it to many a much bepraised three-act drama. It has poetry, illusion, it powerfully grips the emotions: all of which is art's main business."

Burton then praised the acting: "And in Irving's hands, the piece gets its full value. In make-up (how wonderful his art in this phase of it has always been), in the delicate nuances [misprint for nuances?] of 'business,' in the subtle gradations of effect rising to climax, in the mental identification of himself with the role – in a word, for both conception and execution,

this bit of work deserves, it seems to me, to stand high among Irving's later efforts. The suggestion of senile old age, that yet has a dignity, a nobleness, due to great memories, was very finely conveyed; it made one think of the work (with a difference) of Drew and Skinner in that beautiful last act of *Rosemary*, or of certain of the late Felix Morris's roles. Nothing that Sir Henry does is freer from his objectionable mannerisms, and how much there is to note with admiration in voice, walk, tremulous play of head and hand, and a dozen other denotements of extreme age. There was, too, an artistic avoidance of melodramatic over-doing in the final death scene – this in enjoyable contrast with the more drastic finish of 'The Bells'."

George Bernard Shaw, by contrast, thought *Waterloo* and Irving in playing it sentimental claptrap, a triumph of stereotyped writing and acting, and panned the original London production. The judgment of history seems to be on Shaw's side – like *The Bells*, Doyle's play sank without further performance after Irving's death.

Burton liked Sardou's play less well than Doyle's, although he thought Irving was good (in spite of physical unsuitability for the role) as Napoleon, and Ellen Terry "at her brilliant best" as *Madame Sans-Gene*. Burton preferred dramatists less "stagey" than Sardou, including among his exemplars his old Sherlockian friend: "Sardou always shows the defects of his quality. Playwrights in the van of stage technique, like Ibsen, Hauptmann, Pinero, Gillette, are chary of such devices as the 'aside' and the soliloquy; Sardou revels in them." ❖

Ruth Berman

SHERLOCK HOLMES RETURNS

After attending an excellent performance of *Forty Five Minutes from Broadway* at the U of M Showboat, docked at Harriet Island park in Saint Paul, I was informed by one of the cast that their production next summer will be [William Gillette's] *Sherlock Holmes*. The game will again be afoot! ❖

Steve Schier

EXHIBIT REVIEW: “THE REAL SHERLOCK HOLMES”

A SHERLOCKIAN IN EDINBURGH

“It is most certainly to you that I owe Sherlock Holmes,” Arthur Conan Doyle wrote in a letter to Joseph Bell. That letter is one of many items currently on display at an exhibit titled “Conan Doyle & Joseph Bell, The Real Sherlock Holmes.” This rewarding exhibit is featured in the Surgeon’s Hall Museum located at The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Scotland. While on vacation with my wife this past August, I had the pleasure of viewing this great collection of Doyle, Bell, and Sherlockian artifacts. I’d like to share that experience here.



As the birthplace of Conan Doyle and hometown of Joseph Bell, Edinburgh has much to offer visitors with an interest in the creation of Sherlock Holmes. With three days on our itinerary allotted to the city, I would have time to explore some of those important locations. Using the Sherlock Holmes Collections prior to our trip, with the assistance of curator Tim Johnson, I spent two mornings in the reading room learning more about Bell and the places relevant to his relationship with Conan Doyle. That research proved helpful once we arrived in the city.

On the first day we stopped at some popular locations such as the Conan Doyle monu-

ment featuring a statue of his great detective, the plaque signifying his birthplace posted opposite where No. 11 Picardy Place once stood, and the plaque near the Royal Infirmary hung by the University of Edinburgh honoring Conan Doyle as a medical graduate. I intended to spend time during our second day focusing on locations for Bell. That quest became much easier when our literary pub tour guide, Allen Foster, discovered I was a fan of Sherlock Holmes and told me of the exhibit at the Surgeon’s Hall Museum. I was there when the doors opened the next morning.

SURGEON’S HALL

“The Real Sherlock Holmes” exhibit is an added bonus to the permanent collection at the Surgeon’s Hall Museum, which by itself is a remarkable experience. Entering the museum, you start on a path that guides you through the history of surgery and the important roles Scottish surgeons played in the advancement of the field. The practices developed by those surgeons are illustrated alongside many of the preserved specimens they worked on. Continuing along, out of the main room and down a half dozen steps, you enter a long rectangular room through a side doorway. An open ceiling to the collections housed on the floor above and display cases which stand out from the walls of this room help to create small alcoves and give you the feeling this hall would make a great library. But a few paces in, your attention shifts to the right, and just a couple meters away is the Conan Doyle & Joseph Bell exhibit prominently on display at the head of the room.

The purpose of this exhibit is to show how Conan Doyle based a number of Sherlock Holmes’s major attributes on Joseph Bell. Students of the Canon will find many commonalities between Holmes and Bell. In addition, this exhibit makes those similarities clear to all who visit, even those with only a basic knowledge of Holmes. First, Holmes inherits many of his physical features from Bell. Second, the calm and calculating style with which Holmes listens to the troubles of a potential client resembles Bell’s relaxed and controlled manner when questioning a patient. Third, and most impor-

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“The purpose of this exhibit is to show how Conan Doyle based a number of Sherlock Holmes’s major attributes on Joseph Bell.”

“THE REAL SHERLOCK HOLMES” (CONTINUED)

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tant, Holmes owes his extraordinary powers of observation and deduction to Bell.

To teach a visitor how Sherlock Holmes came into existence, three main topics are woven together throughout “The Real Sherlock Holmes” exhibit. The areas covered are the life and career of Joseph Bell, the life of Arthur Conan Doyle, and Sherlock Holmes himself. Each is given equal weight. The designers of this exhibit did a tremendous job gathering documents and items to display.

JOSEPH BELL

As I turned into the exhibit, the first thing that caught my eye was the large painting of Bell in a thick gold frame. It is clear where Holmes obtained his hawk-like nose. The portrait is centered at the head of the hall and is flanked by an 1878 picture of the Royal Infirmary to the left and a display case of surgical notes and specimens to the right. Hanging on stands near the center are Bell’s academic and ceremonial robes and caps. As a professor, Bell wore the solid black gown while lecturing to his students. Along with other surgeons featured in the museum, Bell conducted research and helped advance the field of surgery. A number of his writings are on display. In particular, pages from his clinical notebook as well as his book, *A Manual of Surgery* (1866), are protected in two of the exhibit’s four large glass display cases.

One of the unique characteristics of Bell was his superior power of observation. He tried to impress upon his students that they could learn important facts about a patient, prior to questioning, solely by observation. Bell looked for details which often go unnoticed, such as a person’s style of walk or stains that appear on a person’s clothing. Although not always correct, Bell became popular for being able to meet a person for the first time in his lecture hall and astonish that person by telling them details about their life by merely looking at them.



There is a great example of his talent in this exhibit. Near a pillar on the left side of the hall is a case containing a large book and one other item. The book is Bell’s scrapbook dated from the 1880’s – 1890’s. It is opened to a page with a cutting from the January 4, 1894 issue of the *Pall Mall Budget*. In that article, Bell is questioned about being the inspiration for Holmes. The article cites a time where Bell first met a man and concluded he had been in the military. The man repeatedly denied it until Bell opened the man’s shirt to one side and revealed a tattoo of the letter “D.” This proved Bell was

correct, as the tattoo was placed on the arm or chest of deserters from the British Army at the time of the Crimean War. The practice was outlawed by the year 1900. The other item in the case with the scrapbook? A small container holding a 2-inch square piece of skin, faded with time, tattooed with a “D.”

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

It is not something you see when you first enter the exhibit that reminds you of Conan Doyle, it’s something you hear: his voice. On the right side of the exhibit is a large wide-screen television with two simple wood chairs. Continuously playing on the black and white screen is an interview of Conan Doyle, courtesy of Fox Movietone News from 1929. The aged writer is sitting outside in a suit and overcoat describing how he based Sherlock Holmes on his old mentor, Joseph Bell. Conan Doyle is in a good mood, and to hear his voice in the background as I explored his items on display made the whole exhibit a pleasant experience. While Conan Doyle attended the University of Edinburgh’s medical school, he became Bell’s outpatients’ clerk. During that time Conan Doyle had a lot of exposure to Bell’s powers of observation, and the seeds were planted in Doyle’s mind that would later grow into Holmes.

This exhibit covers Doyle’s life from childhood until his final days. A number of pieces of artwork from his father, Charles Doyle, are on

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“Conan Doyle had a lot of exposure to Bell’s powers of observation, and the seeds were planted in Doyle’s mind that would later grow into Holmes.”

"THE REAL SHERLOCK HOLMES" (CONTINUED)

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display. The most notable pieces are the whimsical original painting, "The Bells of St. Giles," (on private loan) and "An Edinburgh Street Scene 1860's - 1870's" (on loan from the National Gallery of Scotland). The exhibit also includes quite a bit of information about Doyle's schooling and his interests in both medicine and writing. His lecture notes, letters he had written, and many of the books he published are on display in the cases. Those rare items include the magazine where Holmes made his debut, on loan from a private collector.

A FINE EXHIBIT

One feature of the exhibit I particularly enjoyed was a city map posted on the far left wall.

Marked on the map are all the Edinburgh addresses for Bell and Conan Doyle. Each mark is lined up to a photograph and street address, with Bell's residences on the left side of the map and Conan Doyle's on the right. It took a while, but I wrote each address down and marked them on the city map I carried with me. I was fortunate enough to have time to walk by two of those locations before we left Edinburgh.

Overall, "The Real Sherlock Holmes" exhibit is a fine collection of Joseph Bell, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Sherlock Holmes related material. The exhibit accomplishes its goal of praising Bell and showing visitors how he was indeed Doyle's inspiration for Holmes. Those of us who admire the skills of history's greatest consulting detective owe a lot to Bell. I'm glad I was able to experience this exhibit, as it became one of the highlights of our trip to Scotland. ❖

Tim Reich



INTERNET EXPLORATIONS

"He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its Web..."

After a too-lengthy hiatus (and no, I did not travel to Tibet, Khartoum and Montpel(l)ier), I return with a few new or revamped website recommendations. The first two are sites run by fellow Norwegian Explorers. I would like to remind everyone of the website of our esteemed *Explorations* editor John Bergquist. His web page at <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~bergq003/holmes/> has been updated, and although I have mentioned it previously it is worth a new look. It is self described as "Sherlockian Resources on the Internet: A Survey" and can be used as a beginning point for research or a good session of web surfing.

The second site by an Explorer is Charles Clifford's site <http://theminnosotasherlockian.net>. There is not much there at present but there is great potential. I mention it in an effort to get the word out and have it used by Explorers and other Sherlockians. Charles has set up a great forum for any of us who wish to post articles, pastiches, verse, research or whatever. The only contribution so far is a bit of verse and a listing of upcoming events, but I have hopes for the site and need to remember nurture it by passing along some of my own material for posting. Hopefully the site will be used and grow. He also has www.holmestoatee.com where, if you wish, you can purchase sweat shirts and tee shirts with Sherlockian references.

A third site is www.astudyinsherlock.net, a nice looking, informative and well tended site run by Doug Johnston. Doug has periodic articles, often with links, of various items of Sherlockian interest. It is well worth including on your favorites list and checking back frequently.

A final site that is fairly new is Scott Monty's bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com, the blog (Web-log for those who have not come across the term before) of the Baker Street Journal. As with Doug Johnston's site, it has a number of interesting bits of information and is frequently updated. It too is a nice site to check regularly to keep abreast of the Sherlockian world. ❖

Phillip Bergem

"[The new website A Study in Sherlock] is well worth including on your favorites list and checking back frequently."

WILSON LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Elmer L. Andersen Library housing the Sherlock Holmes Collections receives a large amount of attention from the Norwegian Explorers, and well deserved attention it is. However, I would like to concentrate on the resources to be found in another of the University of Minnesota's libraries, the Wilson Library. The Sherlockian connections are many and varied if you know where to look for them.

The Wilson Library is located on the west bank of the University of Minnesota Campus in Minneapolis, a short distance from the newer Elmer L. Andersen Library. It houses several million books, periodicals, maps and newspapers. The books are indexed both by the Dewey and Library of Congress systems, with the two groups shelved separately. On the third floor, under 825.D77, there are a number of Arthur Conan Doyle's novels, Sherlockian and non-Sherlockian, biographies of Doyle, and a good selection of Writings-on-the-Writings. The same range of books, although a different selection, can be found on the second floor shelved under PR4620.

The choice for Sherlockian materials does not end at novels. Are you interested in what the weather patterns or moon phases were for England, lists of London Hospitals, or a wide variety of other facts about England and the world for years that Holmes worked? Up on the third floor you can find Whitaker's Almanack from 1880 to 1992 (with 1900 and 1966 missing) under number AY754.W5. On the first floor, in the reference sections, are copies of *Who Was Who* and *The National Dictionary of Biography*, both of which can be used to check the background of real-life people mentioned or suggested in the Canonical tales. Nearby is also a complete index of the *Times*. The newspaper itself can be found in the basement in the newspapers and periodicals section. The library has microfilm copies back to 1788, so if you wish to check the agony column, you have the opportunity. There are also microfilm copies of *The Minneapolis Journal*. In the July 9, 1892 issue you can find the Sherlockian story "The Copper Breeches." This is not a new adventure featuring metal trousers but instead a humorous typographical error of "Beeches." Still, it is interest-

ing to read it in the context of how our Minnesotan forebears read the story over one hundred years ago.

The periodicals section also has full runs of *The Baker Street Journal*, *Baker Street Miscellanea*, *The Sherlock Holmes Journal* and *McClure's Magazine*. McClure's has "The Adventure of the Final Problem" with illustrations that are a bit different from those normally seen. In the 1890s and up to 1902 the periodical also published a number of other, non-Sherlockian, stories by Doyle.

In the sub-basement of Wilson is the Borchert Map Library, where you can find newer large scale maps of England, old maps of London, maps of Switzerland or France – just about anyplace in the world to assist with exploring the travels of Holmes. The sub-basement also has the Annex which houses a full run of *The Strand Magazine* from volume 1 in 1891 up to 1936, which covers the full run of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

The extent of books available in Wilson Library is astounding. They can be very useful for research or just for fun. The books are available for loan if you are a student, a member of the Alumni Association or a paying member of the Friends of the Library (separate from the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections). Many of the materials are also available through interlibrary loan at your local library.

The main web page is at <http://www.lib.umn.edu/books/>. From here you can find out the hours and access the catalog. ❖

Phillip Bergem



"The Sherlockian connections [in Wilson Library] are many and varied if you know where to look for them.."

PLAY REVIEW: *SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE FINAL ADVENTURE*

(Although the short run of this performance is long past, we are printing this review in case the play should have a future performance in the Twin Cities.- Ed.)

Sherlock Holmes: the Final Adventure, a play by Steven Dietz. Performed at Quadracci Powerhouse Theater, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. April 12-May 14, 2006.

The fog on a mid May afternoon in downtown Milwaukee was only a pale imitation of the peasoupers that often settled in for Holmes and Watson. Yet, inside a brick building known as The Rep a dramatic production called *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* bridged the gap between then and now. For a little over two hours Victorian London came alive and captivated a lively audience in a scintillating adventure of breath-taking action and death-defying deduction.

The billboard in the lobby promised as much: "in this pulse-quickening new play by Steven Dietz passion and intellect collide, and the most insignificant clue can unlock the deepest secrets of mind and heart." It was not false advertising; the production was riveting, engaging, and entertaining from the outset when a mourning Dr. John Watson tearfully informed us that Sherlock Holmes had perished in combat with Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls.

What followed might have been a melodramatic rehash of familiar material, but was instead a complex, multi-layered story. After Watson's doleful announcement, a flashback brought to life a scene from "The Final Problem," with Holmes pacing the handsome set wearing a flashy dressing gown. The confident but endangered detective explained his ambitious plan to uncover and unseat the pestiferous criminal establishment headed by the Napoleon of Crime.

A loud knocking made us suppose that Moriarty was at the door. Instead, the King of Bohemia sashayed into the room; and, unexpectedly, we found ourselves immersed in "A

Scandal in Bohemia." But later, when we set off in the direction of Briony Lodge, we were instead at the residence of James Larrabee, a character whom we had earlier met as Godfrey Norton. This scoundrel, having married Irene Adler, was holding her for ransom - at which point we knew that somehow we were now in the midst of William Gillette's grand drama.

The complicated plot admirably wove these several stories together, also incorporating references from a half dozen other Holmesian adventures. Surprisingly, things never got out of control. Indeed, the dramatic action coiled and uncoiled like a spring, so that when we finally returned to the mournful Watson, we rejoiced that the shadowy figure elsewhere on the stage spoke in a familiar, unghostly voice. From beginning to end we were breathlessly swept up in a splendid piece of theater.

The dramatic action was brisk and crisp; and the richly textured pastiche worked as a singular bit of story telling. The actors carefully walked the line between melo- and straight drama. That is, we didn't mind it at all when Madge Larrabee huffed: "Curse you, Sherlock Holmes!" But we sighed contentedly when we heard the post-Reichenbach curtain line: "There is nothing more deceptive, Watson, than an obvious fact."

When the audience left the foggy streets of London for the misty byways of Milwaukee, there was a sense of satisfaction. Collectively we had been caught up in a complex but captivating adventure in which passion and intellect did, as advertised, collide. Unfortunately, the play has concluded its run in Milwaukee; and, at the moment at least, it is not scheduled to make an appearance in the Twin Cities. However, it is comforting to know that somewhere in time, space, and memory Holmes and Watson tread the fog-bound boards in pursuit of evil-doers. And we can hope, contrary to the title of this play, that this will not be Sherlock Holmes's final adventure? ❖

Robert Brusie



"Victorian London came alive and captivated a lively audience in a scintillating adventure of death-defying deduction."

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP

THE CREEPING MAN

As John Bergquist stated in his opening

remarks at the May 20, 2006 Sherlock Holmes study group meeting in the comfortable surroundings of the University Club, “The Creeping Man’ is the one tale in the Canon that we can classify as science fiction.” He then pointed out that Arthur Conan Doyle penned much science fiction, including such works as *The Lost World* and “The Horror of the Heights.” (The manuscript of the latter work resides in the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota, and a facsimile edition was published in 2004.) Dr. Watson must not have shared Conan Doyle’s love for science fiction writing, or if

he did he must have done so under an assumed name. He did not even provide hints that “The Creeping Man” was in that category, instead attempting to test our faith in his believability. Apparently at the urging of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson retrieved “The Creeping Man” from the tin box, which holds the Holmes cases that are too incriminating for various reasons. With this story, Watson says that he is attempting to “ventilate the facts.”

The story begins in 1903, with Dr. Watson (living somewhere other than 221B) receiving the famous message, “Come at once if convenient – if inconvenient come all the same.” Dr. Watson refers to himself at this time as one of Holmes’s “narrow and concentrated” habits. “As an institution I was like the violin, the shag tobacco, the old black pipe, the index books, and others less excusable.” (No doubt a reference to Holmes’s cocaine habit). Watson goes on to explain his relationship to the now-retired detective, “I was a whetstone for his mind. I stimulated him. He liked to think aloud in my

presence. His remarks could hardly be said to be made to me – many of them would have been as appropriately addressed to his bedstead

– but none the less, having formed the habit, it had become in some way helpful that I should register and interject. If I irritated him by a certain methodical slowness in my mentality, that irritation served only to make his own flame-like intuitions and impressions flash up the more vividly and swiftly. Such was my humble role in our alliance.” After all these years of aiding Holmes, Watson summarizes what we have learned through years of rereading the exploits of this duo.

Oh yes, the story: Holmes and Watson are invited to “Camford,” (probably Ox-

ford), to observe the behavior of Professor Presbury by his daughter and his professional assistant, Mr. Trevor Bennett. Miss Presbury and Mr. Bennett lovingly hope to expose the reasons for the professor’s change from an aging lecturer to a virile and combative character. The most important and revealing of recent incidents involving Professor Presbury were the attacks on him by his dog, Roy. Also of note were a small box from Prague and regular correspondence that was for “the Professor’s eyes only.” Also of mention were the Professor’s newfound love of walking on all fours and scaling walls.

We all agreed that the Professor’s habits were beyond the scope of human behavior. We did not think that any potion could cause such an alteration of human abilities. However, we did descend into a discussion of steroids and their use by athletes. We discussed human growth hormone but were unable say whether either “serum of langur” or “serum of anthro-

(Continued on page 11)



Illustrations by Howard Elcock

“The story begins with Dr. Watson receiving the famous message, ‘Come at once if convenient – if inconvenient come all the same.’”

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP

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THE CREEPING MAN (CONTINUED)

poind” has been used in experiments on humans. So far, anyway, we have not seen any baseball players hit a home run and then scale the stadium ramparts. Stay tuned for that, no

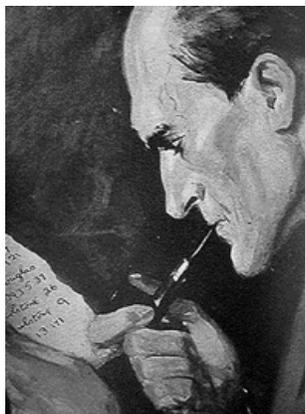


doubt.

As this was our last meeting before our summer hiatus, we wished the best of travels to those who were to travel to Europe and other parts, meeting with fellow Sherlockians. ❖

Charles Clifford

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE



The Study Group reconvened in September after a summer hiatus.

An informal poll taken amongst the Sherlock Holmes study group found that “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire” is one of Arthur Conan Doyle’s least appreciated stories. The poll was taken at our September 23rd, 2006 meeting at the

Roseville Public Library, the first after our summer hiatus. Many of us did find value in the story’s beginning, however, in which the subject of vampires was quickly introduced in a letter to Holmes from a former client, E.J.C. of Morrison, Morrison, and Dodd. This brought down the “V” volume of



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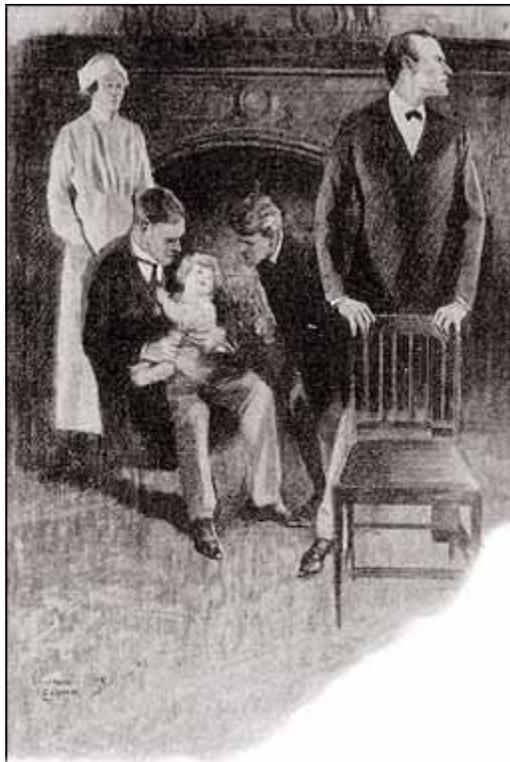
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THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE (CONTINUED)

Holmes's great index system, and the famous reference to "Matilda Briggs" and "the giant rat of Sumatra." This caused a digression about the identity of this "giant rat." Let me describe this discussion as "merely speculative."

We enjoyed Holmes's gentle put-down of Watson: "I never get your limits, Watson," then "There are unexplored possibilities about you. Take down a wire like a good fellow." Watson was no doubt distracted by memories of his early athletic career, to such an extent that he was unable to discern that the "friend" referred to in Ferguson's letter was indeed Ferguson. "Big Bob Ferguson," Watson remembered, "the finest three-quarter Richmond ever had. He was always a good-natured chap. So like him to be so concerned over a friend's case." Watson's good-nature had distorted the encounter somewhat. In Ferguson's words, "You don't look quite the man you did when I threw you over the ropes into the crowd at the Old Deer Park." It was also amusing how both Watson and Ferguson saw each other as shadows of their former selves. In Watson's words, "There is surely nothing in life more painful than to meet the wreck of a fine athlete whom one has known in his prime."

Ferguson goes on to admit that he has invented his "friend" due to his desire to protect and help the accused vampire, his wife. We discussed how Watson often attributes "hot-bloodedness" to the women of Latin America – a stereotype of that era. We digressed again into a discussion of curare and other poisons. Not a good representation of curare here. Some thought Jack might have the makings of a scientist or even that of a detective. Others thought he had just the traits of a criminal. A young Moriarty? More possibly a young Colonel Moran. We remembered the lame sheep in "Silver Blaze." Was Jack just conducting a scientific experiment on Carlo, the family dog? (Discussion leader Phil Bergem mentioned that Doyle had a family dog named Carlo.) We noted how Holmes was able to see the hatred on Jack's face and infer that it was directed towards the baby. We wondered about the future of a marriage in which the husband could be-



lieve that his wife was a vampire. We all agreed that Ferguson did dearly love his wife, young Jack, and the baby. We could only hope for the best in that situation.

Not much deduction in this one for Holmes. Did Doyle give in to his fascination with science-fiction and let the sensational aspects dominate this story? Holmes, no doubt, would have left this story out of the Canon. As our group was gathering to leave, a mention was made of the next "triennial conference," to be held at the University of Minnesota's Andersen Library July 6th through July 8th, 2007. Make your hotel reservations early or late; we hope to see you there! ♦

Charles Clifford



"We enjoyed Holmes's gentle put-down of Watson: 'I never get your limits, Watson. There are unexplored possibilities about you.'"

The Norwegian Explorers

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