

A PUBLICATION OF THE SCOWRERS & MOLLY MAGUIRES OF SAN FRANCISCO

VERMISSA DAILY HERALD

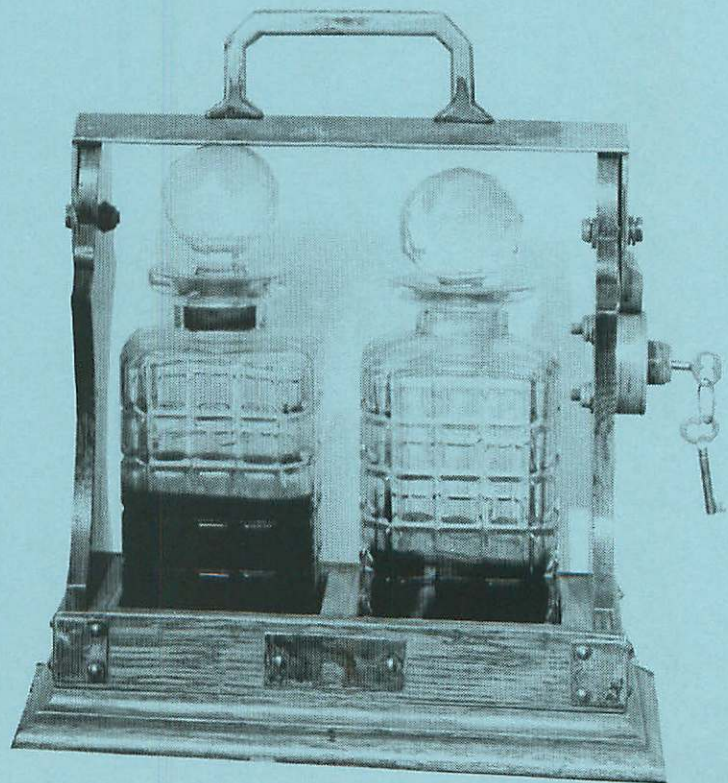
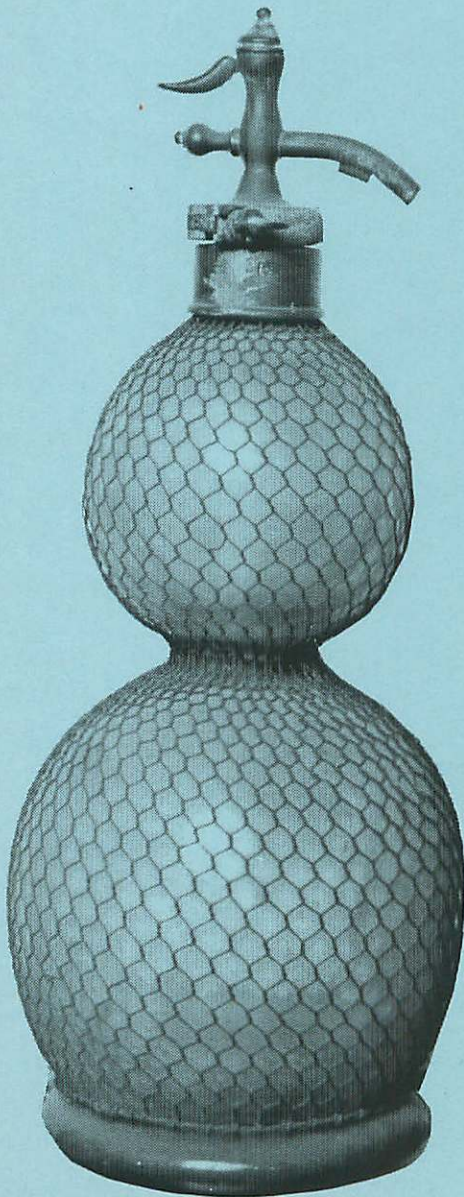
In This Issue. . .

Clairvoyantly, My Dear Watson!

The Adventure of
the Paris Opera Ghost!

The Case of the Slippery Scribe!

And Much More. . .



*"...he waved me to an arm-chair,
threw across his case of cigars, and indicated
a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner."*

A Scandal in Bohemia

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THE STAFF OF THE VERMISSA DAILY HERALD

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A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF
SHERLOCK HOLMES

Sherlock Holmes, the greatest detective and perhaps the best and wisest man whom the English-speaking world has ever known, was born in 1854. He practiced as a private enquiry agent in London (chiefly at the immortal address of 221B Baker Street) from 1877 to 1891, when he was believed to have perished in the act of destroying the arch-criminal Professor Moriarty. In the third year he returned from the dead and resumed active practice until his retirement in 1903. Since that time he has devoted himself to beekeeping in the Sussex Downs (emerging from retirement to save the British Empire in 1914), and may, since his obituary has never been published, be still alive at an advanced age.

The world-famous accounts of his cases, from "A Study in Scarlet" (1887) to "The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes" (1927), were written chiefly by his friend and associate Dr. John Hamish Watson (two accounts are by Holmes himself and two by questionable hands). Watson's skillful literary agent was his fellow physician Arthur Conan Doyle, himself a writer of some reputation, especially as a historical novelist. The assertion by the agent's sons that their father "wrote" the cases and even that he "created" the character of Holmes is patently absurd.

This creed is the firm belief of most rational men, but in particular, it is the devout doctrine of:

THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

—Anthony Boucher
1911-1968
Founding Bodymaster
The Scowlers &
Molly Maguires

* * * * *

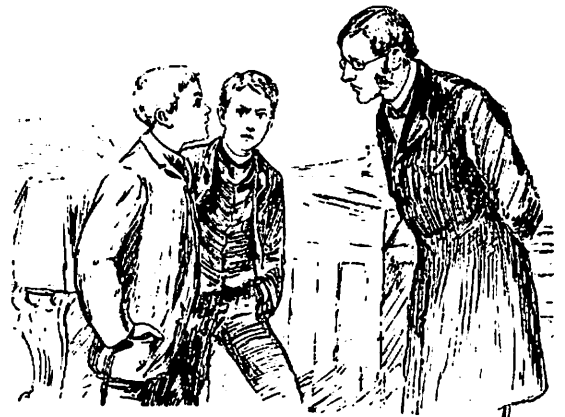
WHO ARE THE IRREGULARS?

The original Baker Street Irregulars were a band of street urchins employed by Sherlock Holmes as assistants. Their namesakes today are an informal association of admirers of Holmes, devoted to the enjoyment and study of the Holmesian Canon, to happy conviviality, and to the publication of a quarterly journal of *Holmesiana* and so many other books and pamphlets that it has been remarked, "Never has so much been written by so many for so few."

The present Irregulars came into being in 1934, under the tutelage of the late Christopher Morley, who was the organization's first and only Gasogene (or chairman), ably abetted by bookman Vincent Starrett and news analyst Elmer Davis. The original group of seven members has spread until there are at least a score of scion societies in the United States - with such names as "The Speckled Band" (Boston), "The Hounds of the Baskerville (sic)" (Chicago), "The Brothers Three" (Moriarty, New Mexico) - and many loosely affiliated groups abroad, notably in London, Tokyo and Copenhagen.

Irregulars come from all branches of life and range from librarians to astronauts.

* * * * *



THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA
IRREGULARS

THE VERMISSA DAILY HERALD

The Bay Area scion (chapter) of the B.S.I., known as "The Scowrsers (after a secret society of terrorists in "The Valley of Fear") and Molly Maguires" of San Francisco, was founded in 1944 by bookmen Joseph Henry Jackson and Anthony Boucher. This group meets irregularly (approximately three times a year) for dinner, discussion, the reading of papers and frequent toasts. The membership includes such diverse occupations as journalist, bank vice-president, travel planner, broker, photographer, writer, and numerous doctors, lawyers, teachers, office workers and domestic scientists.

Your interest in Sherlock Holmes is the principal requirement for membership in this group. If you would like to obtain more information regarding membership in The Scowrsers & Molly Maguires please send your inquiry, along with a stamped self-addressed envelope, to:

The Scowrsers & Molly Maguires
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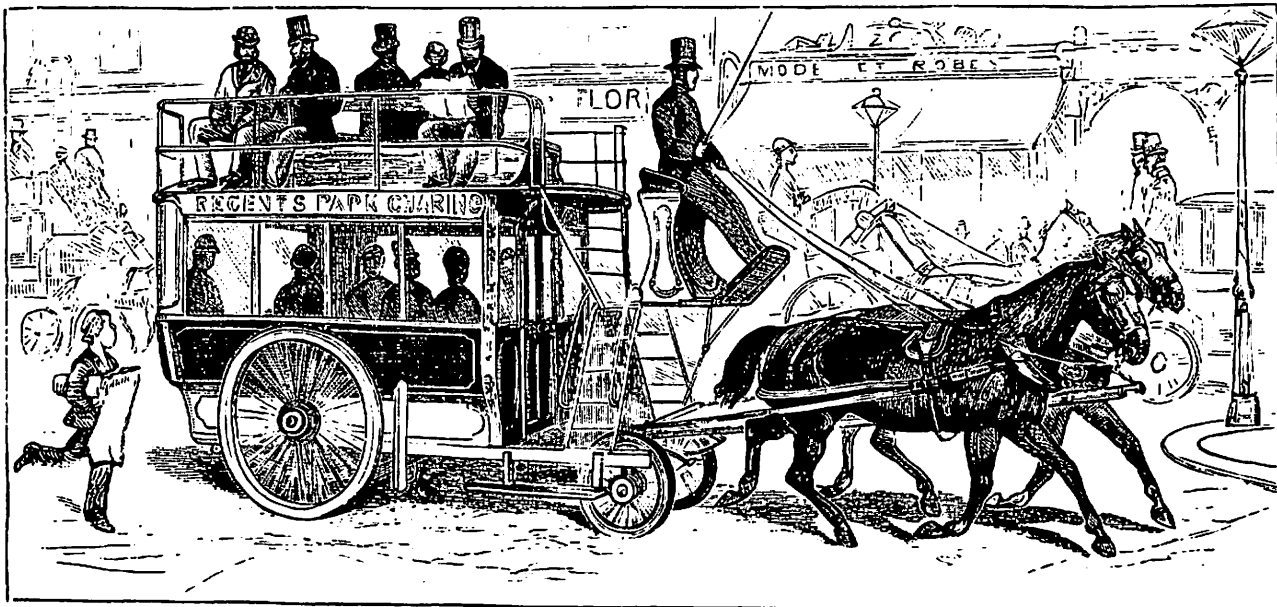
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CLAIRVOYANTLY, MY DEAR WATSON!

WINNER OF THE 1990
DEAN DICKENSHEET AWARD

**CLAIRVOYANTLY,
MY DEAR WATSON!**

By
Rev. Nancy Louise Mackenzie



"How on earth did you know that?"(1) Dr. John Watson expressed his amazement at Mr. Sherlock Holmes' talents so often that it is clear that he never really understood them. The purpose of his writings, he stated, was to illustrate "those peculiar qualities which my friend possessed in so high a degree."(2,3) Even though Watson spent much of his time bewildered, sitting "helpless and unhappy, staring into the fire"(4) he was perpetually in awe of Holmes' "great powers and Masterly manner."(5) Watson was correct when he remarked: "Mediocrity Knows nothing higher than itself; but talent instantly recognizes genius."(4) He faithfully recorded his friend's exploits so that we may draw our own conclusions about his abilities.

* * *

Stamford told Watson from the very beginning: "A good many people have wanted to know how he finds things out."(1) Holmes made it his business to know what others did not know. anything that another man could invent he could certainly discover. Clients came to him because he could "read great things out of small ones."(6) He saw not only every fact but what lay behind it. He noticed not only what happened but what did not happen.

"No ticket!" Holmes exclaimed, "Dear me, Watson, this is really very singular."(7)

Often the most crucial issues in his investigations were those things that had not happened. He believed that: "The world is full of obvious things which nobody by chance ever notices.(8) Observation with me is second nature."(1)

How did Sherlock Holmes gain access to information which eluded everyone else? "After all, Watson, I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies."(9) Watson described him remarkedly when he said: "Then it was that the lust of the chase would come upon him, and that his brilliant reasoning power would rise to the level of intuition, until those who were unacquainted with his methods would look askance at him as on a man whose knowledge was not that of other mortals."(10)

Possessing tremendous confidence in his abilities, Holmes claimed: "I know well that I have it in me to make my name famous. No man lives or has ever lived who has brought the same amount of study and of natural talent to the detection of crime which I have done."(1)

Holmes believed in applied science. Knowledge was not an end in itself, its only purpose was to help him make sense out of the world around him. He had faith in logic and analytical reasoning and he valued systems which were useful to him in his work. Watson commented that "in his methods of thought he was the neatest and most methodical of mankind."(11) He craved data and facts, and would not theorize if they were insufficient. Cases were left unrecorded because their explanations were "founded rather on conjecture and surmise than on that absolute logical proof which was so dear to him."(2)

"Crime is common. Logic is rare."⁽¹²⁾ Holmes chose to show himself as someone who placed "true cold reason above all things."⁽⁵⁾ He held everyone's attention by his superior analysis of the facts in each case. He acknowledged his peculiar talents of intuition but did not credit his success to them. He criticized himself by saying: "Perhaps when a man has special knowledge and special powers like my own, it rather encourages him to seek a complex explanation when a simpler one is at hand."⁽¹³⁾

It is time to reconsider the assessment of Holmes' character which places his logic and intellect above all and take into account the functioning of his keen sensitivity and intuition as well. It was this sensitivity that elevated his detective work from a science to an art and allowed him to be so successful in his chosen career. The basis of Holmes' art was the mixture of imagination, the mother of truth, and reality. For him it was always "art for art's sake."⁽⁶⁾

* * *

What was Holmes' true nature? "Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms,"⁽¹⁴⁾ he commented when mentioning his family history. He was, indeed, more kin to the tiger, "who roams the jungle, unseen until he pounces, and then evident only to his victim."⁽⁷⁾

Holmes was a man of instinct. "every instinct I possess cries out against it," he stated. "It's wrong — It's wrong — I'll swear that it's wrong."⁽¹³⁾ He was a man of arrogance. "It is fortunate for this community that I am not a criminal,"⁽⁷⁾ he noted truthfully. He was ambitious, aggressive, volatile, passionate, and subject to the blackest of moods.

As strongly as he defended the Victorian sense of order and stability, he denied that its rules applied to him. He chided Watson, "I'll do the criminal part. It's not time to stick at trifles."⁽⁷⁾ Always the hunter, his character demanded stimulation and excitement.

The most obvious truth about Holmes was that he possessed and used abilities that other men did not. Watson questioned him: "But do you mean to say, that without leaving your room you can unravel some knot which other men can make nothing of, although they have seen every detail for themselves?"

"Quite so," Holmes replied, "I have a kind of intuition that way."⁽¹⁾

Holmes had the ability to comprehend and assemble from his own awareness the steps which led to a particular result or situation. He declared: "There should be no combination of events for which the wit of man cannot conceive an explanation."⁽⁴⁾ From a drop of water a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagra without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it."⁽¹⁾ These statements were true in his experience. He could reason backward from effects to causes, deducing from a single fact "not only all the chain of events which led up to it but also all the results which would follow from it."⁽²⁾

* * *

What is revealed in Watson's portrait of Holmes' nature? Simply, that Holmes was clairvoyant and he used his clairvoyant abilities to create his success as a detective. Holmes was able to solve mysteries merely by hearing clients tell their stories. It was not always necessary for him to look at the scene with his eyes to know what really happened there. He told Watson, "It was easier to know it than to explain why I know it."⁽¹⁾

He instructed Watson, "Can you see them in your mind's eye?"⁽¹³⁾ Watson tried this method, but what he finally recorded was his friend's irritation at his methodical slowness, irritation which "served only to make his own flame-like

C L A I R V O Y A N T L Y , M Y D E A R W A T S O N !

intuitions and impressions flash up the more vividly and swiftly."(15)

Holmes understood the complexity of people's lives. "He loved to lie in the very center of five millions of people, with his filaments stretching out and running through them, responsive to every little rumor of suspicion of unsolved crime."(16)

He "loved to come to close grips with his man." He said, "I like to meet him eye to eye and read for myself the stuff he is made of."(17) He could tell if someone was telling the truth and did not hesitate to tell a client: "Your story is an absolute fabrication.(13) Tell us the truth," he demanded, "for there lies your only hope of safety."(9)

He had an almost hypnotic power of soothing when he wished."(6) When he told a client, "You must not fear. We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt,"(18) he said with certainty.

Hours were spent in meditation, usually accompanied by one of his pipes. It was in these trance states that he unravelled the facts and reconstructed the scenes which concerned him. "I reached my results," he said, "by sitting upon five pillows and consuming an ounce of shag."(19)

"Where do you think I have been?" he asked Watson.

"I have been to Devonshire."

"In spirit?"

"Exactly. My body has remained in this armchair and has, I regret to observe, consumed in my absence two large pots of coffee, and an incredible amount of tobacco. After you left I sent down to Stamford's for the Ordnance map of this portion of the moor, and my spirit hovered over it all day. I flatter myself that I could find my way about."(8)

Holmes believed in "the settled order of Nature."(8,20) His knowledge that "the horse is a very gregarious creature"(21) was extremely useful to him. He had no interest in the supernatural, he preferred to show that the devil's agents were made of flesh and blood. His experience and confidence as a spirit helped him maintain his perspective in situations which frightened others. "This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground," he told Watson, "and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply.(22) If the matter is beyond humanity, it is certainly beyond me."(23)

* * *

Holmes' overpowering desire was to use his clairvoyant abilities without restraint to assist him in his chosen career. "The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for his peculiar powers, was his highest reward.(5) His whole eager face shone with an inward light when the call for work reached him."(4)

Challenges were needed which would require his powers. He was at his greatest intensity when he was physically engaged in a case. Watson recorded; "All the demoniacal force of the man masked behind that listless manner, burst out in a paroxysm of energy.(24) One realized the red-hot energy which came over him from the moment that he entered the fatal apartment.(23) The swing of his nature took him from extreme languor to devouring energy."(10)

The state of intensity in which Holmes thrived engaged all of his energy and abilities and allowed him to be at his most creative and productive. When there were no cases to occupy his talents, Watson feared "that dangerous calm which brought more peril to my friend than all the storms of his tempestuous life."(25)

In activity to Holmes was excruciatingly painful. Often he would be able to immerse himself in his chemical

experiments, his writings, records or music, but when these were completed he had to face hours of idleness. He cried to Watson: "What is the use of having powers, Doctor, when one has no field upon which to exert them? Crime is commonplace, existence is commonplace, and no qualities save those which are commonplace have any function upon earth."⁽⁵⁾ Inactivity was intolerable to him because it denied him the use of his abilities, it denied his reason for existence. He was not comfortable living within the dictates of society and he had no intention of trying to adjust to them. "I abhor the dull routine of existence," he stated, "I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world."⁽⁵⁾ When Holmes faced Idleness he faced oblivion. His past success did not matter at that point.

An effective way was found to deal with this agony. He turned to drugs, cocaine and morphine. Their effect on his system was clear to him. "I suppose that its influence is physically a bad one," he admitted. "I find it, however, so transcendently stimulating and clarifying to the mind that its secondary action is a matter of small moment."⁽⁵⁾

The injections siphoned off the excess energy which accumulated during inactivity and tormented him with its intensity. The drugs took away his pain by making him unaware of it, at the same time they heightened certain mental sensations and obliterated others. When he was engaged in his work he did not need this artificial assistance to regulate his energies.

Why did Holmes detach himself from the emotional? "detection is, or ought to be," he stated, "an exact science and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner."⁽⁵⁾ Idleness was a vexing situation, but emotional confusion would have been devastating. "The emotional qualities are antagonistic to clear reasoning"⁽⁵⁾ was his explanation.

What he really meant was that he could not afford to allow his or others' emotions to confuse his perceptions and conclusions. His sensitivity to those around him was so heightened that he would have become completely overwhelmed and rendered powerless. The only way he could remain objective and confident of his deductions was to remain separate from emotion. He never denied that he possessed the strongest of emotions, he merely understood that it was necessary to prevent emotions from interfering with the clarity and neutrality he required in his work.

* * *

What has this exploration of Mr. Sherlock Holmes' character revealed? When Watson exclaimed, "How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head,"⁽⁸⁾ he was not far from the truth.

Holmes was a tremendously capable clairvoyant. He used his awareness to discover the smallest of details and comprehend the most complex events. He fashioned from science and logic methods which assisted his clairvoyant abilities in successfully resolving his investigations. He was able to see into the minds and hearts of clients and criminals alike, echoing the "inmost thoughts of their souls."⁽¹⁶⁾ He read the shadows on people's faces and the atmosphere of rooms. He left his body and travelled as a spirit to gather information and he went into the deepest of meditations to unravel the evidence. He was affected to his core by how the people around him lived their lives but he demanded of himself detachment from emotional involvement to ensure his neutrality. He lived by his instincts, which cried out for the truth to be revealed. He dedicated his life to exploring and using his talents and he created a career in which they would be fully challenged.

* * * * *

Source for all quotations:

Sherlock Holmes:
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Page locations in the original text are noted for each reference in order of appearance in this paper.

- 1.) A Study in Scarlet
Vol. I—pages 7, 9, 16, 17, 16, 14, 18.
- 2.) The Five Orange Pips
Vol. I—pages 289, 289, 300
- 3.) The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez
Vol. I—page 841.
- 4.) The Valley of Fear
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- 5.) The Sign of the Four
Vol. I—pages 107, 205, 108, 113, 108, 107, 108, 117.
- 6.) The Adventure of the Red Circle
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- 7.) The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans
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- 8.) The Hound of the Baskervilles
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- 9.) The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle
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- 10.) The Red-Headed League
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- 11.) The Musgrave Ritual
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- 12.) The Adventure of the Copper Beeches
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- 13.) The Adventure of the Abbey Grange
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- 14.) The Greek Interpreter
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- 15.) The Adventure of the Creeping Man
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- 16.) The Adventure of the Cardboard Box
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- 17.) The Adventure of the Illustrious Client
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- 18.) The Adventure of the Speckled Band
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- 19.) The Man with the Twisted Lip
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- 21.) Silver Blaze
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- 22.) The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire
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THE ADVENTURE OF
THE PARIS OPERA GHOST

by
Wendy Anne Powers
Summer, 1989

The acting company arrived in Paris. The sun washed over the rooftops with its early-morning light, illuminating shadows with dusty slants of lazy yellow. Young men and women, jovial actors all, ran down the plank of the docked ship in high spirits. The Sasanoff Shakespearian Company had just completed an eight-month tour of the States, which began in November, 1879, and, having been seen there by some visiting French nobles, were invited to play in the Paris theaters. That is, the Paris theaters except for the Paris Opera House, which in all its new grandeur would not allow such an unknown company to tread its rich floorboards. The extravagant building, finished in 1875, had in five years become the social center of Paris, the beginning and focal point of La Belle Epoque. Whether or not the Sasanoff Acting Company would be performing in it, the members were all anxious to see the Paris Opera House. Particularly one tall, quiet young man, though not necessarily just for its operas.

"Company!" Sasanoff halted his actors and actresses with his imposing voice. "Before you drink in the splendor of this city and immerse yourself in its gaiety, while I as usual am working, may I remind you that you are each responsible for a three o'clock rehearsal and an eight o'clock performance. You may get yourselves drunk afterwards."

Sasanoff began to turn away, but remembered something. "Oh, and Sherlock, do try to remember the time in whatever musty museum in which you are undoubtedly about to bury yourself."

Sasanoff was wrong. Sherlock Holmes, twenty-six years old, this time shared the interests of his fellow actors — somewhat. His light blue eyes, gradually turning grey, were piercingly clear and



intent underneath his strong black eyebrows and pitch-black glossy hair. Upon hiring Sherlock, Sasanoff was struck by his long face and long sharp nose, which gave Sherlock a good profile on the stage. Sasanoff thought that Sherlock would be a very good-looking dashing young man if he was not so damnably serious about everything.

The actors slowly made their way through the heart of Paris, pausing only at each street artist who captured their attention, for a moment. Even those who had been to the city before were allured by its romance, held in awe by the monumental buildings. Then they reached the Paris Opera House, feeling their hearts jump as they knew it without anyone having to tell them which building it was, standing before it more reverently than they did before the cathedrals, for a theater is, especially to the young, impressionable actor, almost holy.

Sherlock had saved a part of his salary each week so as to attend the opera every Monday and Tuesday, the two days — and evenings — Sasanoff allowed his actors free. The new Paris Opera House was more, though, than the lofty height of music for the young Sherlock, already a deeply passionate lover of music. Sherlock heard the stores, some facts and perhaps some exaggerated, of the complex and unordered five cellars of the Opera house, un-numbered and perhaps unknown number of trap-doors, secret rooms, and hidden passageways. As much as he

turned, a man's voice, causing him to startle, and as it faded away, he caught a few words: "Let me pass...I am the rat-catcher, with my rats!"

Making his way through the third cellar, Sherlock was daunted at reaching a dead end. Leaning against the wall was a set piece from the Roi de Lahore. Sherlock was about to turn back, but was troubled by that wall. He knew there must be more room behind it. Certainly he had walked much further along in the first and second cellars. Sherlock began examining the wall for any pin, and after long minutes of painstaking work, he touched upon a loose stone which turned back, creating a breach through which Sherlock dropped himself and the lantern which had guided him, so far.

Looking above him, Sherlock saw the stone had swung back on itself and closed the entrance. He had dropped several feet. The room in which he found himself — strange and marvelous and unreal — was mirrored on every side, of which it had six, with an iron tree, if that is how it could be described, built in one corner and reflected all around, and — no apparent way out. It would be months later that Sherlock was to find out what that room was. He was intrigued as to the purpose of this room, recognized its great ingenuity, but he began to feel claustrophobic, and his mind was quickly taken over with one thought that kept him from speculating on the use of this trap. He must find a way out.

It would soon be dawn outside. Sherlock, at various interludes, crawled and reached on his feet, desperately looking for a spring or lever in the walls of glass. Minutes dragged into over an hour, and, as he thought the sun must now be rising, which he began to believe he may never see again, Sherlock heard the strains of music washing over him. He stopped groping the glass wall to listen, thinking the sound to be coming from his own delirium.

He sat on the stone-cold floor, pausing in his work; and then, Sherlock knew the music was not his imagination, for he could never imagine something that beautiful. The sound all about him expressed every suffering, every woeful emotion ever felt in the world, ever known to man, adding to Sherlock's delirium a drunken feeling, as if spirits were rushing through every vein, making every feeling more intense. Driven now not only by the want to escape from this windowless and doorless room, but by the need to find the source, the well-spring, of that beauty, Sherlock forced himself out from the captivation of the music than was enveloping him, to resume searching for a way out.

He reasoned that whoever built this room would not have put the catch to the door out of their own reach; and Sherlock, being tall, surely he could find it. The ceiling was several feet high, and it was impossible to go out the way he came in. He finished searching the fifth and then the sixth panel, or so he thought (as he had long since lost his bearings amid the maze of reflections seen by the faintly dying lamplight). The music continued — where else could it be? He started searching the edge of the floor, driven to find that music. He was lucky. The door, unlocked, pushed open after the small nail on the floor was turned. A plate of glass turned back, and Sherlock entered into a small bedroom decorated with delicate furniture in the Louis-Philippe style. The room looked untouched, a shrine, or as if it were waiting for its own special inhabitant, but Sherlock did not pause to examine it.

Every door inside was open. Sherlock made his way from one room through to the next, following the music, discovering this to be a house with nothing exceptionally strange about it, but for that first mirrored room and the incredulous fact that it existed, unknown, in the cellars of the Opera.

Sherlock walked in the final room, and encountered a man hunched over an

THE ADVENTURE OF THE PARIS OPERA GHOST

organ, so entirely and utterly absorbed in his music that he did not hear Sherlock walk up behind him.

Sherlock stood silent for a moment, awestruck in the presence of this genius, angel, or devil he did not know, at work.

"You are a genius!" Sherlock blurted out. The hunched man violently brought his hands down on the organ keys, creating the sound of thunder, terrible and ugly, and spun around to face the intruder in his house.

"This music — you composed it! This house! You must be a genius", repeated Sherlock.

The two men, one young and one old, stood face to face. The older man's arms were already raised to fatally strike, as he had done so before in his life, but something made him pause and lower slowly his hands. His face was uncovered and the light was strong — nothing to mask his hideously deformed features. Had Sherlock seen this demonic face before he heard the heavenly music that it could create, he might not have been blinded by it. Yet, there was something pitiable in the sunken eyes and in the man that looked out from them. The older man thought that standing before him, for the first time in his entire life, was one who did not notice his deformity before anything else, who did not shrink away from him in horror and disgust. Standing before him was the first man to see him first not as monster, but as the genius he was. For this, the older man did not kill him.

"I must finish my work. You may sit and listen." For the next hour and three quarters, the two men were silent, while the music filled all the air around them. After that time passed, the older man rose, turned away from his organ, and faced Sherlock. "Would you have some breakfast with me?" he said haltingly, unused to words of friendship.

The older man, whose name was Erik, Sherlock found out, invited him to come sit in his box for that evening's performance. Every night Erik attended the opera, sitting in a box which for reasons unknown to Sherlock, the management kept empty, arriving and so leaving unseen by all. Afterwards, he led Sherlock down his secret roads and hidden doors, and played until early in the morning for him, one who appreciated and admired his work.

A sort of trust was slowly coming between them, uneasy at first, but growing because of their shared devotion to music and the understanding they felt of each other. Every Monday and Tuesday evening, Sherlock would sit with Erik in box five, and afterwards he should follow Erik again to his house on the lake. Erik would play and they spoke, but little, and so it continued and would continue for a period of four months.

Sherlock realized that there was a phantom of the opera, that it was Erik, briefly glimpsed by ballet girls in the outlying halls and corners. But Sherlock fully believed that any mischievous or cruel acts attributed to Erik were not his own, but simply accidents or made-up stories. An unknown man in the shadows, Sherlock reasoned, was a convenient and natural scapegoat.

In fact, Erik gained Sherlock's sympathy. From the few words they exchanged every week, Sherlock learned of his past life. He found out that Erik was disfigured from birth, and worse, instead of having an equally crippled mind that might have been able to accept its life because of its lack of understanding of it, Erik was given a brilliant, amazing, clever mind, one that rebelled against his unfair fate. Unable to accept the horror, or either the pity, of men towards him, Erik made his decision to live removed from society. He lived in the cellars of the Opera since its building, when he had contrived to work in the construction of it. He had more than five years now to build and

furnish for himself his secret rooms, a normal life, and they were complete.

Architecture and building were some of Erik's great talents, but music was his sole passion. Thus, Erik and Sherlock always sat in silent reverie before the stage and singers, silence befitting a church. Once Erik broke that silence.

"Do you see the chorus girl on the left? Christine...the beautiful face matches her pure heart. One day soon, she shall be a great singer." Sherlock had also noticed her beauty, but he thought little of Erik's comment at the time. Sherlock would remember it twice, though: in a few months, and again in a few years, that at a time when he would see another beautiful singer whose heart, by contrast, was not kindly and innocent.

Next to his organ, Erik played a violin. The one he owned was made of wood so deeply red that it appeared as if flames were spreading across it whenever it was moved.

One night Erik offered to Sherlock, "Would you like to play it? I can tell you play, Sherlock. It's in your eyes every time you look at that fiddle. I dare say you have broken the tenth commandment — thou shalt not covet, you know. You may accompany me, if you like." Sherlock picked up the bow, and followed Erik's lead. Sometimes Sherlock knew the piece; other times he listened to what he believed were Erik's compositions and learned to improvise. One time Erik played the violin in Sherlock's presence. It was the "Resurrection of Lazarus", played so beautifully that Sherlock wept, both for the music and for knowing that he would never be able to create that perfection, never be able to play like that. The very angels were singing, and it was like the music of the spheres was opened for ordinary man's ears. Then, strangely, as Erik approached the end of the piece, he began to play too fast, each note a little higher than it should be, as if he were mocking it. Too many times Erik had

asked for a miracle; when he was young, he had played "The Resurrection of Lazarus" hopefully. Sherlock said nothing.

The next week, on Monday evening after the opera, Sherlock was carefully looking at some of Erik's unique possessions in the sitting room of the house on the lake, while Erik prepared tea. Sitting neatly placed on the shelves and desks were rare objects, many that Sherlock thought to be Persian, stones and carvings in deep hues of wood. Sherlock lifted a small jade statue off the desk, running his finger along its sharp lines and cool smooth sides.

A piece of notepaper dropped to the ground from the movement of the statue, and Sherlock leaned down to replace it on the desk. The paper had been face down, but in falling turned over. The writing on it was so bold that the words involuntarily jumped to Sherlock's eyes. Letters in red crayon, printed clumsily like a child's strokes, stood in shocking contrast to the whiteness of the paper.

The words began to sear Sherlock's brain as their meaning sunk in:

"Dear Messieurs Manager,

You are now seven days tardy in the payment of my twenty-thousand francs for this month. As I have told you — and demonstrated for you — before, I find this matter inexcusable. You shall pay within forty-eight hours of receiving this note, or suffer the consequences. Sincerely yours, The Opera Ghost"

Sherlock turned around, letter in hand, and saw Erik's monstrous face before him.

"I would not concern myself with other's finances if I were you," Erik said coldly.

"But, you are stealing from these people — you are blackmailing them!"

"How else do you expect me to live? I have expenses, as you or any other person."

"But it is wrong — it is not just!" Sherlock cried passionately.

"Is what God did to me just? Is it not wrong?" thundered Erik. "My face bears injustice for a lifetime. You foolish naive boy. What did you take me for? Did you never wonder how I had money?" Erik paused, and then said lightly, "It is a trifling thing. They have plenty of money; it's hurting no one. I do not see that it matters, anyhow."

"It should matter, to you," replied Sherlock. "Do you want to live dishonestly — it will eat away at your soul. It will corrupt you."

"My dear boy, it is too late for that. Do you not understand? There is no justice in the world."

They said nothing the rest of the evening.

The acting company's time in Paris was drawing to a close. Sherlock was eager for it to end. One last night, he left for the opera. Following the revelation of the letter, Erik took joy in showing to Sherlock some of his more devious creations and thoughts that he had before perhaps tried to hide. As they walked around the room last Tuesday evening, Erik said, "Have you not wondered what the glass room is, the one you used to enter — to break in," Erik smiled at this, a terrible smile, "to my house? It is my torture-chamber. Oh, it is quite clever. Perhaps someday I will be able to show you how it works — I think you would be amused."

"You don't mean this seriously, Erik?" Sherlock had questioned him.

"Don't look shocked. I use it only on poor fools who are better off dead. Not us. Why do you think I didn't kill you? Because I could see you had a great mind, like my own. We are geniuses, Sherlock — it does not matter what else

we do, as long as we create. You must learn this."

Sherlock felt himself losing balance. The pain in his gut was so real that he almost doubled over. In a few seconds all his illusions were torn from his eyes, all his sympathy and sorrow and admiration for Erik ripped from his heart. He had been deceived; he had deceived himself. The worst thing he felt, though, was helplessness. Sherlock finally admitted to himself what he had seen but ignored in Erik's cavernous eyes all along — Erik no longer knew, if he ever had known, right from wrong. He had no morality, no conscience. This man's soul had become as deformed as the face that covered it. And there was nothing Sherlock could do.

Sherlock sensed the inevitable doom that was to come. Erik had killed before, he realized, and would kill again. Having this knowledge, Sherlock felt that he must do something to stop Erik, or that he, himself, would be responsible for Erik's actions. The last evening he saw Erik, Sherlock ventured to ask him a question.

"Erik, what do you use that small bedroom for in the back of the house? It always looks untouched."

"That room contains my heart. It is the room I built for my future bride."

That night Sherlock said good-bye to Erik.

The Sasanoff Troupe was returning to London that afternoon. Sherlock had very little time left. When Erik spoke of his bride, Sherlock was sure he meant the young singer Christine Daae, whom Erik had pointed out to him in the chorus before. That morning, Sherlock found where she lived in a small flat on the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires with an aunt, as Christine was orphaned. Sherlock was walking up the avenue when he saw her leaving the flat, shutting the door behind her. Running to catch her, he reached her shoulder.

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle Daae."

She turned around. "Yes? Sir — do I know you?"

"No, mademoiselle. I am just an admirer — I have seen you at the Opera. Please — listen to me. You must be very careful of yourself in the future; above all else, do not trust anyone."

"Why do you tell me this? I do not understand."

"You must not trust any man, nor spirit or ghost. Take heed of this — it could mean your life. Do not even trust the angels — or those whom you believe they are."

"What do you mean? Of whom do you speak?"

Sherlock had already turned down the street. Something stopped him from saying more, the deep sense that he could not completely betray a friend, or a former friend. That afternoon, he left Paris, not knowing what else to do.

Sherlock returned to London in early December 1880, and resolved to find a flat suitable to his needs and wants. Looking for someone to share expenses, he took up residence with Dr. John H. Watson in January of 1881.

A little over a year later, when Sherlock read of the murder of Count Philippe de Chagny, his body found on the shore of the lake under the Opera House in Paris, the disappearance of the Count's younger brother, and the kidnapping of Christine Daae by a still unknown abductor, he felt that he alone knew who committed these crimes and that he himself was responsible. If he had only known what to do — but he was so young, knew so little in life. He had tried to warn Christine, but still had felt Erik was at least once his friend and as such,

Sherlock could not bring himself to do what needed to be done. He had felt himself a Hamlet in the face of evil. Sherlock's only consolation was that Christine and Raoul de Chagny, he managed to find out, were safe and had escaped to a life of solitude in Norway, where they were now married.

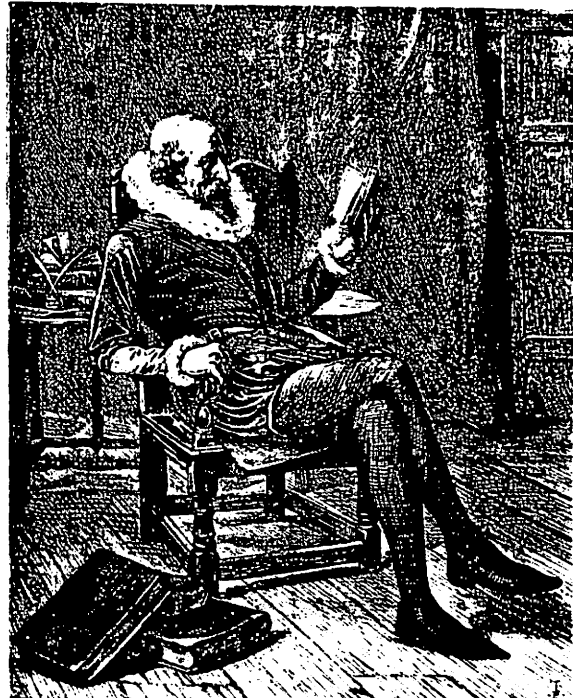
That night Holmes, a little older and a little wiser, vowed that if he were to meet evil genius again in his lifetime, a man who knew not right from wrong, who was blessed by the devil and shunned God, he would not hesitate to do what needed to be done.

* * * * *

ENDNOTES

The character of Erik and his situation is taken completely from The Phantom of the Opera, by Gaston Leroux.

The early chronology of Sherlock Holmes' life and the fact of the Sasanoff Shakespearian Acting Company and its tour is taken from Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street: A Life of the World's First Consulting Detective, by William S. Baring-Gould.



THE CASE OF THE SLIPPERY SCRIBE

THE CASE OF THE SLIPPERY SCRIBE

by
Martin Snapp

(Editor's note: This article appeared in the August 8, 1990 issue of the Oakland Tribune and is reproduced with the author's permission.)

Guess who is visiting the Bay Area this week? Sherlock Holmes secretary, Tony Harries.

Actually, he's a secretary at the Abby National Bank, which occupies the site of Holmes' legendary London address, 221B Baker Street. Every day, more than 100 letters arrive at the bank addressed to the great detective. And it's Harries' job to answer them. (More about the letters later.)

Harries is currently touring the United States, visiting various Holmes fan clubs throughout the country. But last week disaster struck: They lost him somewhere around St. Louis.

Who did they turn to to find him? Me! I got a frantic call from Frank Darlington, president of the Sherlockian society in Seattle, the Sound of the Baskervilles.

"Harries has disappeared," he cried. "He's supposed to come here before he goes to San Francisco, but nobody has heard from him for days! Can you find him?"

Elementary, my dear Darlington. I called a guy in Olympia, Washington, who gave me the name of a guy in San Diego, who gave me the name of a guy in San Rafael, who gave me the name of a guy in Santa Fe, who gave me . . .

Well, to make a long story short, I finally located Harries in Denver. In the spirit of another American journalist, who discovered another missing Britisher, my first words to him were, "Mr. Harries, I presume."

"I had no idea I was lost," he told me. "I've just been having a good time seeing the sights."

* * *

Oh yes. The Letters?

"Mr. Holmes gets more letters than any other fictional character except Father Christmas," said Harries. "Of course, we never admit that Mr. Holmes is fictional. He has been asked to solve Watergate and the Iran—Contra crisis. He has been asked to find Jimmy Hoffa. And many schoolchildren ask him to find their lost homework, so they can prove to the teacher that they really did it.

"He gets letters from all over the world, but for some reason, an unbelievably large number come from Poland."

Why Poland?

"I can't figure it out. But, I'm sure Mr. Holmes could."

* * *

Harries will lunch with the Bay Area's own Sherlockian society, the Scowlers & Molly Maguires (named after the villainous gang in "The Valley of Fear") this Saturday at their regular meeting place, the S. Holmes Esq. pub at the Union Square Holiday Inn. Then, at 3 p.m., they'll throw open the doors and invite the public in to meet him.

And for my efforts in locating the elusive Mr. Harries, I've been dubbed an Honorary member of the organization by no less than the grand old man of Sherlockian scholarship, John Bennet Shaw of Santa Fe, NM. Said he: "It was a bit of sleuthing worthy of The Master himself."

* * * * *

SHERLOCKIANA

**THE FOURTH ANNUAL
RUNNING OF THE SILVER BLAZE**

The fourth annual running of the Silver Blaze is now scheduled for Saturday September 15, 1990, at Bay Meadows. All of the previous runnings have been great fun, and quite profitable for some.

The price of \$22.00, per person, includes admission, a copy of the official program, reserved seating for our group and a buffet style lunch in the club house. The lunch has always been quite good, with a wide choice of fare.

The gates open at 11:30 AM and the first race begins at 1:00 PM. Participants should plan on arriving well before the first race to enjoy a leisurely meal and make the appropriate wagering selections before the start of the Silver Blaze.

Prior to arriving at Bay meadows, there will be no way to determine which race will be designated "The Silver Blaze." That designation will, of course, appear in the program guide.

One hint about wagering; 'tout sheets,' specially designed pocket computers and various betting systems are all well and good, however, the most successful betting to date has been on the horses with the most Sherlockian names. Of course, now that I have put it in print, this year may prove an exception. But, who knows, that is the fun of the game.

Those wishing to participate should send \$22.00, per person, to:

Bruce R. Parker, MD, BSI
Medical Center,
Diagnostic Radiology, S-058
Stanford, CA 94301-5105

Reservations need to be made prior to September 3rd.

* * *

**THE 1991 CALENDAR OF
221b BAKER STREET**

We have talked about, rumors have been circulating and now it is a reality. Brian Erickson, Charlotte Erickson and Ron White have been working on a Sherlockian calendar, and it is now ready.

This calendar uses the William S. Baring—Gould chronology to note the beginning and ending of each adventure, as well as listing the birthdates of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. John H. Watson and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. What makes this calendar unique is that this is the only calendar, that I know, to feature photos of the famed sitting room of 221b Baker Street.

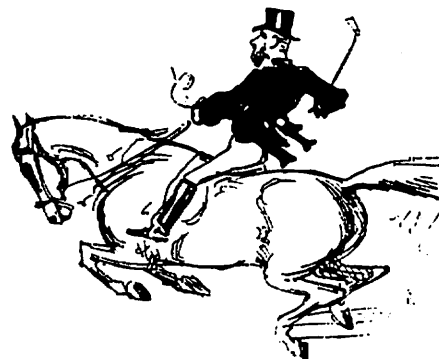
The format is a spiral bound 8 1/2" by 11." When hung for use the calendar measures 11" by 17." Printing is done with a brown ink on ivory paper, so the whole effect is like the older Sepia toned photographs.

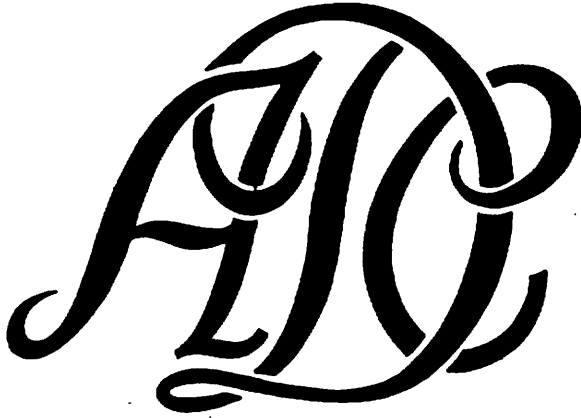
The first one hundred calendars will be serially numbered. Number 1 will be available at auction during the January birthday meeting. After the numbered issues are distributed, the remainder will be sold at the same price.

The calendar is priced at \$12.00(U.S.) each. Shipping and handling is \$5.00 within the U. S. and \$7.50 for foreign delivery. Please make checks and money orders payable to:

The Scowrers & Molly Maguires
C/O Charlotte Erickson
1920 Marich Way
Mountain View, CA 94040

* * *





**The Arthur Conan Doyle Society
Revisited**

It was announced in the previous issue of the Vermessa Daily Herald, that the Arthur Conan Doyle Society was officially established on May 22, 1989 (the 130th anniversary of Sir Arthur's birth). This society is devoted to the study and preservation of the many and varied works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Few people realize how fascinating and diverse Doyle was. No single biography has ever been able to encompass his life.

It is an unfortunate fact that Doyle's involvement with Spiritualism and the Cottingly Fairy photographs has caused many biographers to gloss over major portions of his life. As a result, they have lost sight of the entire man and his motivations. Doyle has even been accused of perpetrating major hoaxes on the scientific community (see the accompanying article "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Cleared of Charges in Piltdown Hoax").

The goal of the society is most worthy and deserves enthusiastic support. I believe that every Sherlockian should make the effort to learn more about the man so identified with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

All memberships are for one calendar year, beginning on June 1st and ending on May 31st. U. S. residents may pay by personal cheque.

When applying for membership, please include your name, address, any Doyleian or Sherlockian affiliations, and whether you wish your name to be available as part of the society's data base. A one year membership is \$32.00 (U. S.), including air-mail rates on the society's journal (ACD) and newsletter (The Parish Magazine). Without air-mail rates, the annual membership is \$24.00 (U. S.).

For membership, or further information, write to:

Mr. Christopher Roden
"Grasmere"
35 Penfold Way
Doddleston, Chester CH4 9ML
England

* * *



**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Cleared of Charges in Piltdown Hoax**

It was in the September, 1983, issue of Science '83 magazine, that I first came across an article linking Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with the "Piltdown Man" hoax. The Article was entitled "The Perpetrator at Piltdown" by John Hathaway Winslow and Alfred Meyer. For those who are unfamiliar with the Piltdown Man, a brief history is in order.

On the 18th of December, 1912, a skull and jaw fragment were discovered at the quarry near the village of Piltdown, in Sussex county. For forty years the scientific community believed that this skull and jaw were one of the "missing links" in human evolution.

In 1953 it was established, beyond any doubt, that while the skull was unusually thick, it was human. The jaw, however, was from an immature orangutan. Both were artificially stained and aged. This revelation shook the entire scientific community, and the finger pointing began.

In one respect, this case is similar to the Ripper case. The theories and suspects are numerous, ranging from the original discoverer (Charles Dawson) to virtually everyone even remotely connected with the site. However, even at this late date, no solid evidence has yet proven who the perpetrator was.

Doyle's name was not linked to the hoax until the aforementioned article appeared in 1983. The authors' evidence was, what I would call, tenuous and circumstantial.

Doyle was a world traveler and during his travels he visited sites that were probably the origins of the skull and jaw fragments, albeit some years prior to the hoax. It was also known that after the discovery Doyle would occasionally visit the site and watch the dig progress. A number of others did the same thing.

Their contention that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle conceived the Piltdown hoax as a vendetta against the scientific community seems quite out of character for the man who would later express implicit trust in the authenticity of the Cottingly fairy pictures because, "little girls would never lie." It is also out of character for the man who spent the last years of his life fighting for the acceptance of Spiritualism as a scientific, and provable fact.

On June 6, 1990, an article appeared in The Oakland Tribune. Under the title, "Science sleuth says he knows mastermind of Piltdown Hoax," the article states that evidence now implicates another suspect.

Frank Spencer and the late Australian historian, Ian Langham, have uncovered evidence in the form of letters and diary

entrees naming Sir Arthur Keith as the chief conspirator.

Prior to the discovery of the Piltdown Man, Sir Keith was a noted English anatomist and an outspoken proponent of the theory that human evolution occurred much earlier than the current evidence indicated. The Piltdown skull was later used to support that theory.

The complete hoax theory, and supporting evidence, will be available in two books, due out later this year. The books will be published by Oxford University Press. At this time titles and release dates are not available.

Will this end the Piltdown controversy?
We can only wait and read the evidence.

* * *

A*G*O*N*I*E*S

TO DR. WATSON: The game is afoot.
Will you run down to Sussex with me?
FROM S.H.

* * *

TO S.H.: The game may be afoot, but so are my bunions. I believe I'll take a motorcar instead of a run.
FROM THE DOCTOR

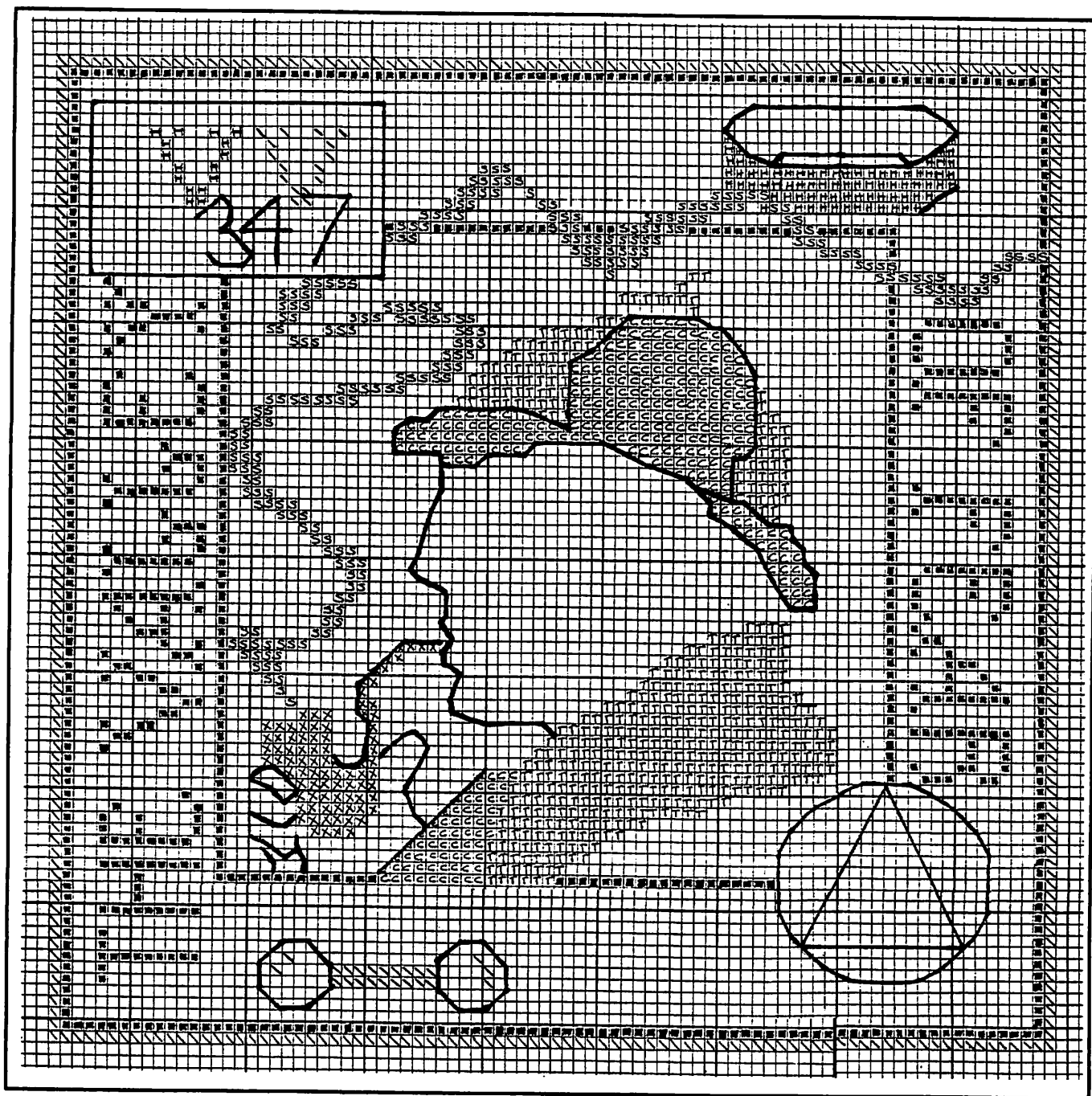
* * *

TO THE DOCTOR: You don't seem to be writing as much lately, might I suggest a good secretary. I have found mine to be quite helpful.
FROM S.H.

* * *

TO VARIOUS WRITERS: If I had spent the time dreaming up all the hoaxes attributed to me, I never would have finished my writings.
FROM A.C.D.

* * * * *



The Valley of Fear

Cross-Stitch Design

Finished Size: 6" x 6" on 14-count Aida

- Black - Only the Outlines of face and hand, "347" and card, and circle and triangle
- Gold ■ Dark Gold ■ Tan ■ Brown ■ Gray ■ Dark Blue
- ⊗ Dark Brown - and the outline of the Deer Stalker

The 1991 Calendar of



221b Baker Street

as located at
the S. Holmes, Esq.
Holiday Inn-Union Square
480 Sutter Street
San Francisco, CA

Available Now!

**Designed and produced by Brian and Charlotte Erickson,
with photography by Ronald White.**

This calendar features 12 photos of the Sherlock Holmes sitting room, as seen at the Holiday Inn-Union Square, in San Francisco. It also marks the beginning and ending of each of the Sherlockian adventures, and the birthdates of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. John H. Watson and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

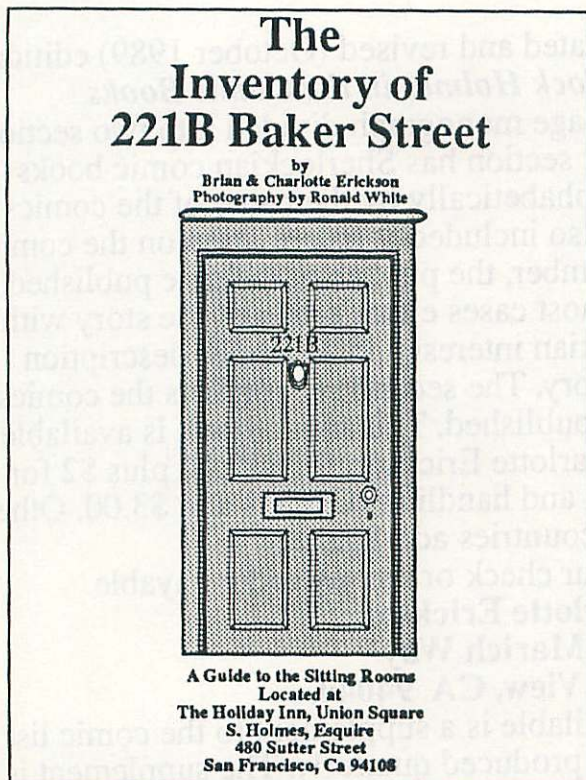
**Calendars are priced at \$12.00 each,
plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling within the U.S., \$7.50 for foreign delivery.**

Please make cheques payable to:

**The Scowlers & Molly Maguires
C/O Charlotte Erickson
1920 Marich Way
Mountain View, CA 94040**

The Inventory of 221B Baker Street

By
Brian & Charlotte Erickson
Photography by Ronald White



The new and revised edition of *The Inventory of 221B Baker Street* is a comprehensive listing of the items found in those most famous sitting rooms of the World's Greatest Consulting Detective as recreated at the S. Holmes Esq. in the Holiday Inn Union Square, San Francisco. Included are descriptions of the items, along with quotes from *The Canon* where they are mentioned. There are detailed photographs of the room, by section, showing the location of these items. Also, in some cases, special individual photos were placed within the text. Lastly, there is a floor plan giving a general layout of the room.

This monograph is generously authorized by **Dame Jean Conan Doyle** for publication and is available from Brian and Charlotte Erickson for \$10.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling (Canada add \$3.00, other foreign countries add \$6.00). Send your cheque or money order payable to:

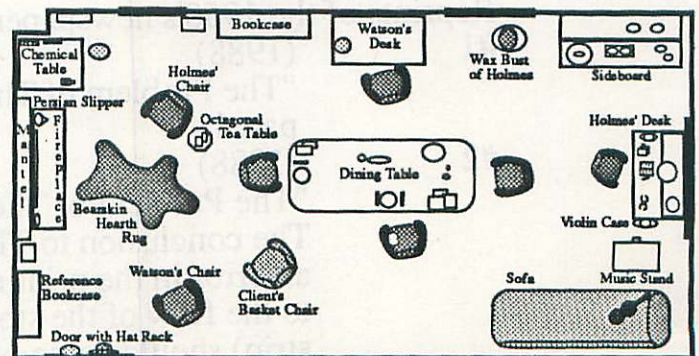
Brian or Charlotte Erickson
1920 Marich Way
Mtn. View, CA 94040

Proceeds from the sale of this monograph go to help *The Scowlers and Molly Maguires*.

EXAMPLE:

Gasogene: A device for producing aerated water, often referred to as 'soda water', by the chemical reaction of an acid upon an alkali carbonate, typically used when mixing alcoholic drinks.

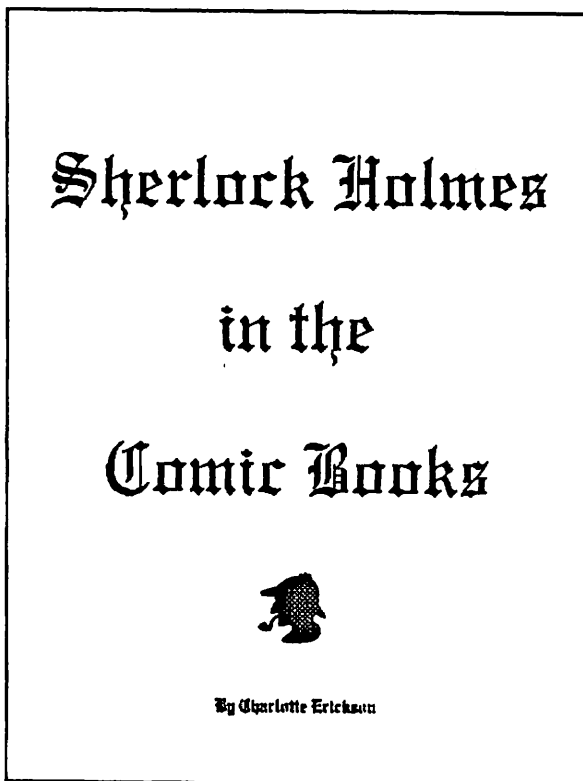
Ref: "With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he [Holmes] waved me [Watson] to an arm-chair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a **gasogene in the corner**." SCAN
"The gasogene and cigars are in the old place." (Holmes) MAZA



Floor Plan of 221B Baker Street at the S. Holmes, Esq.

Sherlock Holmes in the Comic Books

by Charlotte Erickson



The updated and revised (October 1989) edition of *Sherlock Holmes in the Comic Books* is a 45 page monograph divided into two sections. The first section has Sherlockian comic books listed alphabetically by the name of the comics book. Also included is information on the comic book number, the publisher, the date published and in most cases either a title of the story with Sherlockian interest and/or a brief description of the story. The second section lists the comics by year published. This monograph is available from Charlotte Erickson for \$10.00 plus \$2 for shipping and handling (Canada add \$3.00, Other foreign countries add \$6.00).

Send your check or money order payable to: **Charlotte Erickson**
1920 Marich Way
Mtn. View, CA 94040.

Also available is a supplement to the comic list which is produced quarterly. The supplement is \$3.50 per year (add \$1.00 more for overseas postage).

EXAMPLE:

Sherlock Holmes
(Eternity Comics)

Reprints of the 1950's newspaper comic strips.

#1 (1988)
"The Problem of Thor Bridge"

#2 (1988)
"The Problem of Thor Bridge"

The conclusion to THOR runs pages 1-3. There is an error in the printing though, page 3 (according to the flow of the story and the artists date on the strip) should come before page 1.

Beginning on page 4 is part 1 of a new story where Sherlock Holmes is called in to investigate the murder of Sir Aubrey Poppin.