



November/December, 2003

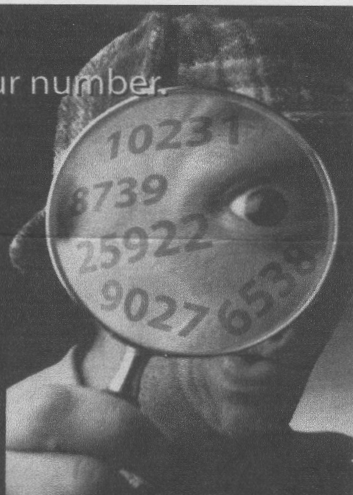
Communication No. 236

The Pleasant Places of Florida

Vol.7 No. 8

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THIS AD WAS SENT IN BY SHARP-EYED CARL HEIFETZ.

From the Papers on the Sundial:

The holidays are coming up fast and we must all prepare our turkeys and geese for the feasts. We hope you enjoy this regular issue, as well as two more special issues coming your way before the end of the year (we hope).

As we write this, our fall gathering is coming up, but by the time you receive your issue, it will be gone, so you'll have to wait until next year for any reviews and news of the meeting.

In the meantime, keep sending in any ads, news, & info you run across on Holmes and his crew. You can submit to either Carl Heifetz or Wanda Dow and we'll see that it gets to whoever is doing the next issue.

Happy Holidays to all. Enjoy your friends and families.

FROM THE APPENDIX OF THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA by Gaston Leroux, Foreword by Peter Haining, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, NY

Holmes And The Opera Ghost

In *The Phantom of the Opera*, Gaston Leroux says, "The events do not date more than thirty years back." He was referring to the events that attended the kidnapping of Christine Daae', the disappearance of the Vicomte de Dhagny and the death of his older brother, Count Philippe.

The Phantom of the Opera was published in 1911, which means the aforementioned events took place around 1881. It would be interesting to know if Holmes was aware of the mystery of the Opera, and if the news articles concerning the Ghost found their way into his scrapbooks. Did Francoise le Villard, Holmes' colleague and a member of the French detective service, have anything to do with the case? If Holmes did take an interest in the case, I wonder what theory he formed?

When Holmes was presumed dead, from 1891 to 1894, he spent some time in France and his love for the opera might have led him to the Paris Opera House. If he had been interested in the case he might have wandered about the opera house testing his theories. He could have known the location of Erik's trap doors. It is, I suppose, venturing too far to think that he knew the secret of the opera's cellar.

Holmes travelled in Persia between 1891 and 1894, where he could have discovered information about Erik's past. In Persia, Erik's will was law, and he was guilty of not a few horrors, for he seemed not to know the difference between good and evil. He took part in a number of political assassinations. It was also in Persia that Erik built his ingenious Palace for the Shah-in-Shah.

So did Holmes see or hear of this Palace during his travels? And did Holmes read Leroux's account of the Opera Ghost during his retirement and thus confirm his theories?

DMR

Devon County Chronical
April, 1965

Sherlock Holmes Meets The Living Corpse

In 1880, the fashionable Paris music world was shocked and stunned by the news of a mysterious "Phantom" of the Paris Opera, a (cont. on page 3)



CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA

November 7-23 - *The Crucifer of Blood*, Paul Giovanni's play, will be performed at the Indianapolis Civic Theatre, 1200 West 38th Street, Indianapolis, IN. Visit www.civictheatre.org

November 8-9 - *From Gillette to Brett, Sherlock Holmes on Stage, Screen & Radio Symposium*, sponsored by Wessex Press/Gasogene Books. Morning film fest, afternoon speaker session, dinner banquet, post-banquet party, & Sunday brunch. Noted speakers and special guests, including Nicholas Meyer and Edward Hardwicke. Omni Indianapolis North Hotel, 8181 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis, IN \$99 per person Pay Wessex Press and send to Steven Doyle,

December 1-7 - Jon Llewellyn will appear in David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes - The Last Act!* at the Jermyn Theatre near Piccadilly Circus.

2004

January 10 - Look for another film festival organized by the PPOF in Seminole, FL to celebrate the 150th birthday of Sherlock Holmes. Contact Mike Bryan or Carl Heifetz for more details.

February 14 - The 2004 Wessex Cup will be coming our way at Tampa Bay Downs Racetrack in Oldsmar, FL. Contact David McCallister for details.

February 29 - *Colonel Moran's Gun Club* will hold its quadrennial Muskrat Hunt somewhere near Chicago. The time and location have not yet been divulged. Contact Elliott Black at

April - Congratulations to The Tropical Deerstalkers of Miami, FL on their 25th anniversary!

April 16-18 - The *STUD-Watsonian Weekend*, with the STUD dinner on Friday at the Sheraton Four Points in Schiller Park, IL. Race on the 17th at Hawthorne Race Course. That evening will be the annual pizza party and Sunday Fortescue Honours Brunch at the Sheraton. Contact Allan Deviss & Susan Diamond,

or email at

April 17 - The Chicago *Silver Blaze* will see it's 45th annual running at Hawthorne Race Course.

HE'S EVERYWHERE...

Check out www.generalpatton.corporateprog.com/Sherlock_Holmes.htm for a look at Chuck Kovacic's recreation of the Baker Street sitting room ... David Timson's reading of *A Study in Scarlet* won Naxos the 2002 Audiobook of the Year Award and it is reported that his *Sign of Four* is just as good ... The Occupants of the Empty House have several items for sale, including back issues of Beeman's Christmas Annals. Contact Stan Tinsley at

for a list ... Issue No. 6 of *MQ*, the official magazine of the United Grand Lodge of England, includes a 5-page article by Yasha Beresiner titled *Elementary, My Dear Brother* about the Masonic career of Arthur Conan Doyle ... Speaking of Doyle, *The Times* reported on September 6 that he is no longer seriously suspected of perpetrating the Piltown Man hoax. The principal suspects are now Charles Dawson, who discovered the fake fossils, and the zoologist Martin Hinton ... *Sit-Down Comedy* is a book of short stories by stand-up comedians edited by Malcolm Hardee and John Fleming from Ebury Press. One critic reported that "The gem of the collection is Simon Munnery's *The True Confessions of Sherlock Holmes* in which the revered detective's coke habit is his defining feature and he only solves crimes by accident." ... *TIME* 8/11/2004 issue has in it's article *If You Read Only One Mystery Novel This Summer...* several reviews of books. In one, titled *'Fear Itself'*, by Walter Mosley, they comment on its' characters (cont. on page 3)

FOR SALE

Our friends at *Classic Specialties* sent along a copy of 'The Sherlockian Times' and it is chocked full of items you'll want to buy for the Sherlockian in your life (or maybe just for yourself!). Among the books are *Some Observations on Baritsu* by James Webb; *Travelers' Companion to the London of Sherlock Holmes* by David Hammer; *A Sherlock Holmes Almanac* by Petersen, Thiel, Murdock, Darlington, Christenson & Vanderburgh; *Absolute Discretion* by Grant Eustace; *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* (first 5 volumes) by Leslie Klinger; *Baker Street Once Again* by Jens Jensen; *A Day-by-Day Chronology of Mr. Sherlock Holmes* by William Dorn; *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library: The Return of Sherlock Holmes* by Leslie Klinger; *The Twentieth Century Limited Mystery* by Philip Shreffler; *The New Good Old Index* by William Goodrich; *The Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Reader: from Sherlock to Spiritualism* edited by Jeffrey & Valerie Meyers;

Sherlock Holmes: In His Own Words and in the Words of Those Who Knew Him by Barry Day; *Study Guide to Sherlock Holmes, Vol. 1 & 2* by William Dorn; *The Detective's Album* by Mary Helena Fortune; and a trilogy by David L. Hammer, *My Dear Watson, Vital Essence and My Dear Holmes*. There are many more books and items for sale, so contact Classic Specialties at PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219 or go to the web site at www.sherlock-holmes.com to start your holiday shopping!

DO YOU WANT TO BE PUBLISHED?

The Baker Street Dispatch is looking for submissions. BSD,

We Have Been Voted One Of ...
Sherlock Holmes' Top Sites

Stop for a visit and push us to the Top

Check out www.ytown.com/holmeshome/topsites.cgi?shsl



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE / by Stephan Pastis

The
Adventures
of
Detective Bob
by Rat



Detective Bob received a telephone call from his old friend, Sherlock Holmes.



"I need your help," said Sherlock . . . "It's the case of the hooded bandit."
"Tell me more," said Bob.



"He wears a bedsheet over his head," said Sherlock . . . "We haven't a clue who he is."



"The solution is elementary, Sherlock. Simply examine the beds of all the townsfolk. The bed of the criminal will have a distinctive feature."



© 2003 Stephan Pastis
theratlandpig@aol.com

"A distinctive feature?" asked Sherlock . . .
"What could that be?"



11/2
Dist. by United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

"No sheet, Sherlock."





MORE SHERLOCKIAN LIMERICKS

BY MIKE CARROLL

Lestrade - two versions

He's the pride of the Yard, is Lestrade
There's no case into which he won't wade.
"The pick of a bad lot."
But he's all that they've got,
Faute de mieux, he will lead the parade.

He's the pride of the force, is Lestrade.
His deductions are oft rather broad.
But to Holmes he's a pro
And we frequently go
For his aid and the help of the Yard.

The Speckled Band

Dr. Roylott, a very strange man,
Lived in Surrey, at old Stoke Moran.
His personal zoo
Was rather strange, too,
And a snake was a part of his plan.

A baboon and a cheetah ran free
O'er the grounds, and so did the gypsy.
But something much badder,
A speckled swamp adder,
He kept locked in security.

Silver Blaze

Here's a story that will you amaze
Of a horse with the name Silver Blaze.
Dirty work by John Straker
Brought in the undertaker,
But none of this Sherlock did faze.

There are many strange clues I could cite,
(The Sussex vampire and its bite)
But what could be meant
By the strange incident
Of the torpid dog in the night?

The Three Garridebs

Let us note here the Garridebs three,
A tale of bald chicanery.
What a bold masquerade
This John Garrideb made,
The result? Just a bad shivaree.

(cont. from page 2) "You might say Paris plays Watson to Fearless's Sherlock Holmes, If Holmes had been a jock instead of a nerd." In reviewing *'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time'* by Mark Haddon we learn that the hero, 15-year-old Christopher Boone,

(cont. from page 1) deformed, demented musician who kept the performers of the Opera in constant panic, operating out of a fantastic dwelling in the catacombs of the music hall. Erik, the Phantom, had kidnapped the lovely prima donna, Christine Daae', murdered her fiancé's brother, and stolen a tremendous sum from the managers of the Opera. These sensational events had been terminated by the Phantom's death at the hands of a frantic mob. But months had elapsed before Erik's demise, and his activities had been secret, the Paris *Surete* being utterly unable to crack the case. Therefore obviously they were forced to employ an outsider. That employed agent could very well have been Sherlock Holmes.

Gaston Leroux, a newspaper reporter, had covered the Phantom business and subsequently wrote a book in 1911. In it he does make certain allusions to the fact that a mysterious 'agent' had been there. It is reasonable to believe that such an incident, having received so much attention in the Paris *Epoque*, would have been given notice in *The Times*, of which Holmes was an ardent reader. The great detective was always interested in unusual happenings, and the tragic tale of the macabre Erik would certainly have aroused his curiosity. Although his reputation was not as widespread as it later was to become, his name was known, and the *Surete* may have considered him just the man to unravel the web of mystery shrouding the Paris Opera House. Having his remarkable mental powers and great knowledge of human nature, he could have broken the case and delved into the motives behind the Phantom's fantastic crimes.

It is doubtful, though, that Holmes would have personally directed or instigated a mob to destroy Erik. Holmes no doubt would have been eager to come face to face with the man who had once called himself "The Living Corpse." To cut off Erik would have cheated Holmes of seeing something really bizarre, and in view of Holmes' apparent love for the unusual, it would have been odd indeed.

It is surprising, too, that this case has never been published. Although the friendship between Holmes and Dr. Watson did not begin until 1881 it is probable that the great detective had related this tale to him in later years. And perhaps, too, someday, when Dr. Watson's strong box at Cox and Company is opened, a story entitled 'The Singular Adventure of the Phantom of the Paris Opera' will be discovered.

Barbara Goldfield

A Pageboy Christmas Annual, 1966

is "a fan of Sherlock Holmes, whose devotion to logic and reason are a boon to a young man who can't understand emotions, and Christopher uses the Holmes stories as a kind of *User's Guide to Life*" ... the Holiday 2003 catalog of Leather-Bound Books from Easton Press lists the complete Sherlock Holmes in a "sumptuous, three-volume, leather-bound set" with accents of 22KT gold, available for just 3 monthly payments of

\$55. Item No. 0135. Call 1-800-211-1308 ... other stocking stuffers coming our way is the catalog from The Sherlock Store which lists among other things, a 2004 calendar in full color, Dorn's 2 volumes of study guides, available in print and cd-rom, the complete Sherlock Holmes and Then Some on cd-rom, a Sherlock Holmes Bobblehead Doll, writing pens, a keychain and a pocket knife. Write them at 2045 S. Monroe St., Denver, CO 80210-3734.

The Pleasant Places of Florida

*founded in 1972
by Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. (dec.)*

Recorder Emeritus: Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I.

For the Record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, Master of the House,

(Master of Ceremonies at most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

Carl Heifetz, Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople),

(Correspondent & Communication)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

(Communications, Bookkeeping)

Please make note of the date on the mailing label. This is the expiration date of your club membership. You will not receive further Communications after this date unless you renew. Renewals should be sent, with any updates, to Wanda Dow. Make all checks payable to Wanda Dow. US\$12.00 (US/CAN) or US\$13.00 (INTL)

PLEASE NOTE ABOVE INFORMATION! ALL CHECKS FOR RENEWAL SHOULD NOW BE MADE OUT TO WANDA DOW. CHECKS MADE OUT TO THE PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA WILL BE RETURNED. WE NO LONGER HAVE A CLUB ACCOUNT AT THE BANK AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CASH SUCH CHECKS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.
