



2008

Communication No. 280

The Pleasant Places of Florida

Vol. 12 No.2

From the Papers on the Sundial:

Sorry this has taken so long to get out. Hope you enjoy the issue and you can join us May 31st at the Spring Gathering!

Sherlock Holmes Scientist Solves A Case of Identity

by Carl L. Heifetz

Published in *The Hounds Collection* Vol. 8, April 2003, p13-15.

In today's Sherlockian science lesson, we will focus on Miss Mary Sutherland and Sherlock Holmes' use of the method of scientists to "find" her missing fiancé. In this adventure, which Dr. Watson has so nicely shared with us under the title of "A Case of Identity,"¹ we will learn how scientists often use great skill in the design of their experiments, how important it is for them to understand how their philosophical apparatus work, and the experience and background required to derive meaningful results from the output of their studies. During this discourse, I will also refer to concepts that I have discussed at length on prior occasions.^{2,3,4}

Most of us are very well acquainted with eminent researchers - i.e. Hawking, Einstein, Moriarty - who made great scientific leaps by the power of their minds using, as their only equipment, a computer, chalk board, or ink, pens, and foolscap. However, these notables had to depend on the efforts of equally brilliant experimentalists to validate the results of their hypotheses. Most scientists, including chemists such as Sherlock Holmes, are not content to give someone else the privilege of proving their pet theories. They would rather derive their own experimental proof rather than let someone else's possible lack of expertise cast doubt on their dazzling theories. Intrinsic to this process are the skills required to design and perform the appropriate experiments and to skillfully decipher the output of their manipulations. I have often been amazed at the skilled interpretation that experienced scientists make in their oral presentations. Virologists deriving great meaning from shadowy scanning electron micrographs have always impressed me immensely. What is even more impressive is the fact that other virologists seem to see the same thing, whereas, to me, the photomicrographs appear like random chaotic images. On the other hand, give me the results obtained with a new antibiotic in

antibacterial chemotherapeutic studies in mouse infection models, and I can probably provide you with a fairly good idea of the likelihood of clinical success against that microbe in man.

You might ask: What has this to do with Mr. Sherlock Holmes and Miss Mary Sutherland? After all, the only use of scientific equipment mentioned in this account are the tools that Sherlock Holmes used to identify the salt that he was working on as the bisulphate of baryta. Yes, but consider the fact that Sherlock Holmes' clients themselves are part of the material upon which Sherlock Holmes works. The Master uses people in the same manner that bacteriological researchers would apply culture media. Just as a trained microbiologist is easily able to differentiate coliform bacteria from enteric bacilli by their pigmentation and colonial morphology on the agar medium formulated by Holmes contemporary Alfred Theodore MacConkey, the scientific detective is able to ascertain vast amounts of information by determining how his subjects respond to his verbal manipulations. Thus, it was not mere curiosity that caused Sherlock Holmes to first ask Mary Sutherland: "Do you not find that with your short sight it is a little trying to do so much typewriting?" And later, "Why did you come away to consult me in such a hurry?" Her astonished response to both of his skillfully designed queries provided Sherlock Holmes with some excellent clues regarding the ease with which Miss Sutherland could be mentally manipulated. This was a critical aspect of her personality that led Sherlock Holmes toward the appropriate tentative hypothesis that he later subjected to further investigation. How very differently Mr. Holmes' mind would have been directed had he found Miss Sutherland to be more mentally acute and less impressionable. And why did Dr. Watson bother to insert this seemingly irrelevant material about Sherlock Holmes' chemical investigations? My opinion is that the clever doctor wanted to draw our minds to the realization that there were many parallels between the methods that a trained chemist would use to identify an unknown chemical, and those needed by a scientific detective to identify an unknown person.

Now, let us examine the rest of this case to demonstrate those aspects of Sherlock Holmes' methodology that are derived from his training as a chemist and medical researcher. We start with Mr. Holmes' (cont. on page 4)



Sherlock Holmes: The Game's Afoot

Type of material: Trade Paperback **Publisher:** Wordsworth Editions, Limited **Year:** 2008 **Author:** David Stuart Davies, editor **Review:** Philip K. Jones, April 2008

This collection is described by the editor as “a new batch of twenty adventures ... to fascinate and entertain you.” The recent appearances of several assemblages of Sherlockian tales constructed around one theme or another have tended to jade the palates of Sherlockians for specialized sorts of mysteries. Without citing any particular example, I have noted, and reviewed, a number of specialized collections in recent times to the point that the appearance of a solid ‘clump’ of Sherlockian entertainment is a welcome arrival. Unfortunately, the Publisher has not seen fit to include credits for earlier publications of many of the included items.

The tales published here for the first time include two well executed stories by Matthew Booth, *The Tragedy of Saxon's Gate* and *The Dragon of Lea Lane*. One of three included by the editor, his *The Adventure of the Whitrow Inheritance*, introduces a particularly cheeky villain. A new effort by M. J. Elliot, *The Adventure of the Forgetful Assassin*, describes a new and unique murder weapon. Rafe McGregor's *The Long Man* is a chilling echo of a real-life occurrence. Two new tales by Christopher Sequeira, *The Return of the Sussex Vampire* and *The Adventure of the Haunted Showman*, both point up the effect of Watson's story telling on Holmes' practice. The single new entry of three by Denis O. Smith, *The Adventure of the Brown Box*, is a classic Sherlockian tale. Two efforts by Mark Valentine complete the list of new tales, *The Adventure of the Green Skull* highlights one of the horrors of Nineteenth Century Industrialism and, *Jerusalem Keep*, written with the help of John Howard, employs Sherlock Holmes, Antiquarian, as an expert witness in a unique court.

Old favorites reprinted here include a selection of hard-to-get items. Two by Davies, *Sherlock Holmes and the Ghost of Christmas Past*, from *The Strand*, and *Sherlock Holmes and the Reichenbach Secret* from *Sherlock* magazine, have only been available in old magazines. Now Mr. Gulli, of *The Strand*, and Mr. Davies, of *Sherlock*, no doubt have copies available, but they are hard for the rest of us to find. M. J. Elliot's *The Adventure of the Hanging Tyrant* appeared in *Curious Incidents II* and John Hall's *The Adventure of the Christmas Bauble* was only to be found in another back issue of *Sherlock* Magazine. On the other hand, his *The Disappearance of the Cutter Alicia* appeared first in *The Shoso-In Bulletin* and was later reprinted in *The Strand* Magazine.

Denis O. Smith's *The North Walk Mystery* and *The Adventure of the Richmond Horror* both appeared in

editions of *Sherlock* Magazine, but *North Walk* was also published in Volume 4 of Smith's *Chronicles of Sherlock Holmes*. Allen Stockwell's *The Adventure of the Intermittent Jig-Saw Puzzle* originally appeared in the second edition of his *The Singular Adventures of Mr. Sherlock Holmes*, but not in the first. In addition, there it was titled simply *The Intermittent Jig-Saw Puzzle*. Both of June Thomson's tales, *The Case of the Vanishing Barque* and *The Case of the Gustafsson Stone*, originally appeared in her *The Secret Notebooks of Sherlock Holmes*.

I believe we may conclude that the editor has succeeded in his goal.

Sherlock Holmes and the King's Governess

Type of material: Hardcover book **Publisher:** Severn House Publishers **Year:** 2005 **Author:** Barrie Roberts **Review by:** Philip Jones

This Eighth in the Series of Roberts Holmesian novels is well up to his earlier works. It takes place during Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A lady, whom Watson identifies as Mrs. Diana Fordeland, has come to England for the Jubilee. She has been living with her daughter's family in Canada for some years and has come to see the King of “Mongkuria,” for whom she was governess during the reign of his late father. It appears she is being followed by two different groups and is concerned for her safety and that of her granddaughter who accompanies her.

The lady is able to provide drawings of the parties she has seen following her and Holmes takes the case with no hesitation. He tells her that he has recognized one of the followers as a Russian Military Attachè, who is also Chief of Station for the Czar's Secret Police. She can offer no reason for concern by the Czar's agents about her and her visit to England.

Consultations with Mycroft and Inspector Lestrade serve to bring more players into the mystery but do not provide explanations. The twenty year old murder of an English Army officer in Paris and a tour across Russia for an American Magazine twenty five years before by Mrs. Fordeland only confuse the issue further. Sherlock is told to “Drop the matter” by a Russian Prince and Mycroft has to fend off demands for apologies and extra security from the Russian Ambassador's office.

The King of “Mong- (cont. on page 3)



(cont. from page 2) kuria," a Russian Professor and an English feminist help to resolve a confusing situation with direct action and the skeletons in all the closets are revealed at last. Barrie Roberts comments on the close similarities between "Mrs. Fordeland" and the very historical Mrs. Anna Leonowens of "Anna and the King of Siam" and attributes those similarities to Watson's desire to protect the privacy of Holmes' client. Watson couldn't have known how popular a figure "Anna" would become in later years.

This is another memorable translation of Holmes' talents into the very real historical problems of the Nineteenth Century. He seems to have had a knack for blending the two with generally impressive results. He will be missed.



Death in the Air: His Second Case (The Boy Sherlock Holmes) by Shane Peacock;; \$21.99, 254 pp, hardcover, Tundra Books Grades 5 - 9 / Ages 10 - 14 Posted By Linda Hutsell-Manning

Shane Peacock's second novel in The Boy Sherlock Holmes series, *Death in the Air: His Second Case* is hot off the press and already garnering nationwide praise.

David Ward in CM magazine says that "Peacock has honoured the essence of the original Holmes stories while contributing his own intuitive, exhilarating touches". *Eye of the Crow: His First Case* has been nominated for nine awards in Canada and the U.S. and *Death in the Air: His Second Case* is already nominated for the Junior Library Guild of America Premier Selection (2008 best children's books).

The story opens with young Sherlock standing in a huge crowd in front of London's famous Crystal Palace looking, one moment, up at the amazing performance of high-trapeze artist Mercure and then, in the next, seeing his twisted body lying almost at his own feet. Before being whisked away by patrolling bobbies, young Holmes hears what may be Mercure's last desperate words and sees what looks like a tampering with the trapeze bar.

It is July 1, 1867, only six weeks since London police have taken all credit for Sherlock's

solving of a young woman's murder in *Eye of the Crow: His First Case* and less than two months since the poisoning death of his mother and subsequent estrangement from his father. The boy lives on the streets now and avoids Irene, the beautiful young woman he endangered during his first case.

"The last six weeks have seemed like years. Sherlock has grown much older. He stands up straight when he walks. There is little emotion on his face. His eyes are rarely cast down. He knows who he is and what he will be. His second case stands before him."

In obvious need of lodgings, Holmes manages to talk himself into an unpaid, except for room and board, position with the eccentric old Dr. Bell in his cluttered Central London shop. From here, Sherlock makes forays into the summer-hot London streets, searching out clues, taking the reader on a intense chase for culprits of this grisly crime.

Again, as in the first novel, Holmes must deal with Malefactor, the young crime lord of London being often at his mercy but also being given, albeit grudgingly, slender clues toward solving what turns out to be robbery and possible murder.

In piecing together the events leading up to Mercure's fall, Holmes deduces a connection between the Crystal Palace vault robbery and the sabotaging of the aerialist's trapeze bar. Substantiating this connection proves almost impossible, and it is precisely this impossibility that becomes Holmes's driving force in solving the crime.

Following the harrowing twists and turns of this plot is like riding an emotional roller coaster, inching slowly upward as Holmes pursues the next clue or possibility, knowing that upon reaching the top, both you and the relentless young Holmes will plunge down into an abyss of danger, each one more harrowing and dangerous than the last, the final outcome bittersweet and tenuous leaving the reader wanting to read more.

Although these novels are listed as children's/young adult fiction, both novels will appeal to anyone interested in a gripping mystery with gritty historical detail.

The Three Garridebs

By C. Mike Carroll

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



Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City, MD is hosting *A Scintillation of Scions*, a gathering of Mid-Atlantic/East Coast scion societies for an afternoon of fun, scholarship and socializing, on Saturday, August 16, from 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The day's events will include a keynote speaker, scholarly presentations, a limerick contest open to all attendees, afternoon tea, and a dramatic presentation of *The Adventure of the Second Fiddle*, starring Sherlock Holmes. Details (directions, etc.) and registration forms have been posted on our web site, www.watsonstinbox.org.

This is a call for papers. One of our objectives is to give those folks who have wanted to write and present a scholarly Sherlockian paper just such an opportunity. It is our desire to have at least one representative from as many different scions as possible. There are seven spots for speakers available. The paper can be on any Canonical topic - must be rated PG 13 :-) and presentation of said paper should not last longer than 10-12 minutes. The papers can have multi-media presentations (power point, etc) if desired. A Windows PC laptop and projector available. If any other accoutrements are required the speakers will need to provide them. We are requesting a précis of the proposed paper of about 200 words to be sent to Beth Austin (e-mail or snail mail) for vetting to be received not later than May 15. Beth will review the proposals and notify those who will be invited to speak by June 1. Be sure to include your name, phone number, address, and e-mail. Send to: Beth Austin, 9455 Chadburn Place, Gaithersburg, MD 20886. E-mail: beth.austin@scions.org. For questions about *A Scintillation of Scions*, please e-mail Jacquelyn Morris at jacquelyn.morris@scions.org.

HE'S EVERYWHERE... A visit to www.siracd.com is worth the time. Read about Sir Arthur and even send a friend an electronic greeting card with a Sherlockian quote! ... He's everywhere including Southeast Asia. Visit www.kappachan.com/sherlockholmes for the website of graduate student Nindya in Jakarta, Indonesia... The new film *The Bank Job* was inspired by a robbery at Lloyds Bank in Baker Street in 1971 wherein thieves tunneled into the bank and stole £1.5 million. Wonder where the thieves got *their* inspiration? Were any red-headed? ... You can now download Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* in narrative form from www.naxosaudiobooks.com

CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA

2008

May 31 - 33rd Annual PPoF Spring Gathering. (see ad)

June 22 - **Annual Victorian Cricket Match** between *Gentlemen of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London* and the *Gentlemen of the P. G. Wodehouse Society* held at West Wycombe Cricket Ground. Free. All are welcome, Victorian costume and appurtenances encouraged.

July 6-8—*Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas: A Sherlock Holmes Conference* begins early Friday afternoon with presentations throughout the weekend, luncheon & banquet Saturday. Registration is \$95 for all presentations, the Norwegian Explorer Omnibus & keepsakes. Luncheon & banquet prices separate. Get on the mailing list by contacting

(Sponsored by The Norwegian Explorers of MN, Friends of Sherlock Holmes Collections & the U of MN's Special Collections & Rare Books.)

October 9-12 - *Bouchercon 39 Charmed to Death* in Baltimore, MD at the Wyndham (410-385-6605). Guests of Honor Laura Lippman & John Harvey with Toastmaster Mark Billingham. See bouchercon2008.blog.spot.com

November 7 - 9 —*Re-examining Conan Doyle: Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium*, University of Regina, Regina, SK, Canada. Contact Dr. Nils Clausson, Dept. Of English, University of Regina, Regina, SK S4S 0A2, Canada or www.uregina.ca/hri/Conferences/conan_doyle_2008.shtml

(cont. from page 1) first observation of Miss Sutherland. By noting her "oscillation upon the pavement," he had already decided that she came to consult him concerning an "*affaire de coeur*." When she entered the room, Mr. Holmes gave Miss Sutherland his well known once over, demonstrating those powers of observation that are critical to a serious research scientist. As he later explained to Dr. Watson, he had observed a double line on plush cuffs of both of her sleeves, an indication of long hours spent using a typing machine. Marks on the bridge of her nose signaled that she wore pince nez and was therefore short sighted. Her hurry to rush out to consult Mr. Holmes was evidenced by her wearing unmatched boots half buttoned, and by the hurry shown in writing a note, having dipped the pen too deeply into the ink well, making a fresh stain on her finger and glove. These led to the above-discussed questions that supplied Mr. Holmes with a great deal of information about Miss Sutherland's obvious gullibility.

Knowing the character of his client, Sherlock Holmes was able to see the ways in which her wicked stepfather, Mr. Windibank, was able to convince the very impressionable, near sighted, and lonely woman that he was also another person, her erstwhile (Cont. on page 5)



(cont. from page 4) fiancé, Mr. Hosmer Angel. How many times has someone attempted to disguise their identity by typing or printing (remember *The Adventure of the Red Circle*) their communications? How often have people changed their identities by wearing a mustache, bushy whiskers, and tinted glasses and speaking in a whisper? Coupling these observations with the knowledge that Mary Sutherland let her parents use her large income while she resided in her house, that her stepfather did not want her to meet other people or attend the gasfitter's ball, that Mr. Windibank and Mr. Angel were never seen together, and that the descriptions of these gentlemen had many similarities, Mr. Holmes reached a tentative hypothesis that he would later subject to experimental validation. His hypothesis was that Messrs. Windibank and Angel were indeed the very same person.

Everything was now in place for the experimental test of his hypothesis. Sherlock Holmes confirmed, with Mr. Windibank's employers, that the printed description of Mr. Hosmer Angel, without the obfuscating glasses, mustache, and whiskers, fit Mr. Windibank himself. Then Mr. Holmes made an appointment with Mr. Windibank to discuss his stepdaughter's case with him. The typewritten reply, as Mr. Holmes had hypothesized, was analyzed by Mr. Holmes who skillfully demonstrated

that it was done on the very typewriter that Mr. Angel had used to correspond with Miss Sutherland. And finally, to prove his theory beyond doubt, Mr. Holmes brow beat a confession from Mr. Windibank when he was confronted with the evidence.

Thus, a case that was opaque even to such an intelligent person as John H. Watson, a recipient of the highly prized Doctor of Medicine Degree from London Medical, was made clear by the scientific detective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who applied the very same principles that have led to such modern wonders as the genetic code, miracle drugs, and Velcro.

1. Doyle, A. C. "A Case of Identity" In: *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, with a preface by Christopher Morley, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York, single volume, 1988.
2. Heifetz, C. L. "Staying Focused," *Communication* (a publication of the Pleasant Places of Florida), No. 173 New Series, Volume 1, Issue 5, pages 3-4.
3. Heifetz, C.L. 1998. "The Scientific Detective Solves the Sign of Four." *The Wigmore Street Post Office*, Issue Number 11, Spring 1998, p 3-9.
4. Heifetz, C.L. 1998. "A Study in Scarlet Yields to the Methods of Sherlock Holmes, Scientist." *The Wigmore Street Post Office*, Issue Number 12, Summer 1998, p 18-21,24

33rd Spring Gathering of The Pleasant Place of Florida

Explore wines in the Sherlockian Canon at the 33rd Annual Spring Gathering with witty toasts, erudite discourses, devious quizzes, good food and most of all - excellent companionship. After the luncheon meeting, we will saunter to the nearby *Florida Orange Groves Winery* for a wine tasting experience.

MAY 31, 2008 AT 11:30 A.M.

Lunch at PASADENA STEAK HOUSE (1530 South Pasadena Avenue, St. Petersburg). We will order from the *Early Bird Specials* (\$9.95 - \$12.95, add 25% for tax & tip). FLORIDA ORANGE GROVES WINERY

(1500 Pasadena Avenue) wine tasting is \$3 each.

CASE: *THE ADVENTURE OF ABBEY GRANGE*



Register with Carl L. Heifetz, Representative,

DEADLINE: may 23rd!!! Please include your name, address, phone number and email. Let us know if you have a presentation, a show'n'tell item or a toast. Please note: Toasts and readings will also be assigned at random.



Please Reserve _____ places for lunch. (Individual orders taken from Early Bird menu, separate checks) Please reserve _____ places for the wine-tasting @\$3 each.

Include \$3 for paper work and postage.

\$_____ Donation to the Marshall/Wood Fund (Purchase of Children's Sherlockian books for library donations.)

TOTAL ENCLOSED:\$_____

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)

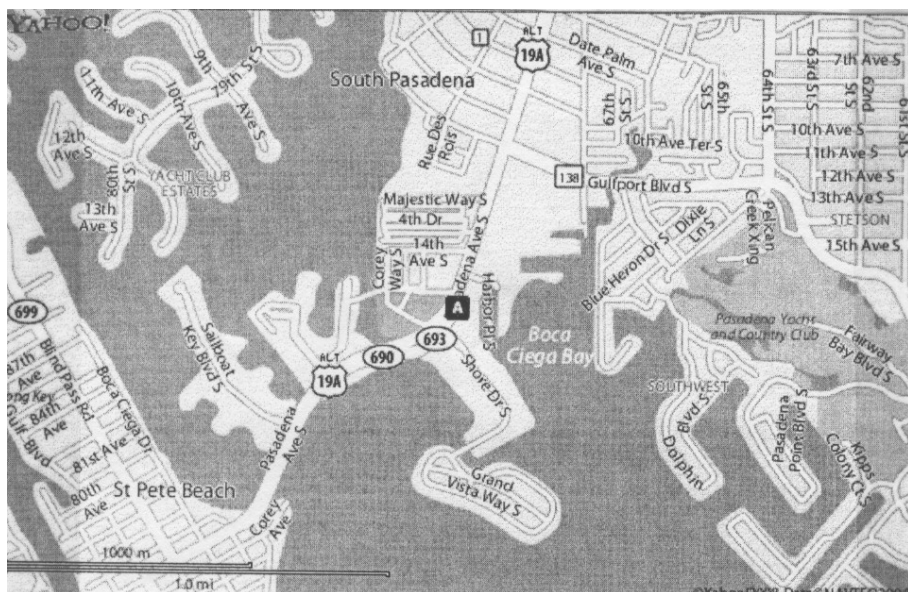
Carl Heifetz, Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople),

(Correspondent) **HE'S BACK!**

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

(Communications and Bookkeeping)

Please make note of the issue number on your mailing label. This is the final issue number of your club membership. You will not receive further Communications after this number 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)



PASADENA STEAK HOUSE
1530 Pasadena Ave. S.
St. Petersburg, FL

