Issue One
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HOLMES ON THE HUDSON

A publication of the Hudson Valley Sciontists,
scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars.

WELCOME!

"You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."

Introductions hold a special place within the Sherlockian world. The opening of each tale captures the imagination, engages the mind and returns the reader to the denizens of Baker Street and Victorian London. Holmes's first assessment of Watson provides a startling first illustration and leaves the reader wondering, "how did he do that." Following "A Study in Scarlet," Dr. Watson offers a series of dazzling introductions throughout the Canon that repeat this process over and over again. In meeting the captivating Violet Hunter, Holmes confirms his talent with the client as he details that she is a musician living in the country who is ardent in her cycling. Watson, similarly, pokes a little bit of fun at himself and characterizes Holmes's deduction as "utterly inexplicable" before Holmes rattles off the six points that confirm that Watson shall not invest in South African securities (DANC).

Watson's introduction of Mycroft Holmes to the world provides a distinctive double punch. Holmes initially concedes that Mycroft has "better powers of observation." Holmes continues that "If the art of the detective began and ended in reasoning from an arm-chair, my brother would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived. But he has no ambition and no energy. He will not even go out of his way to verify his own solution, and would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right." (GREE) The Holmes brothers then offer a stunning demonstration as they gaze out the window of the Strangers' Room, culminating with Mycroft's correction that the retired artillery officer had been shopping for two children. Although Mycroft's role within the Canon remained limited, our first acquaintance with him forever cements his position as Holmes's superior in the art of deduction.

The impact of these introductions frequently masks the extensive research and effort that Holmes dedicated to his career. The ability to discern an individual's home, habits and career required protracted work and study. Watson does note Holmes's "systematic training," (GREE) and initially observed Holmes's "zeal for certain studies

was remarkable, and within eccentric limits his knowledge was so extraordinarily ample and minute that his observations have fairly astounded me." (STUD) We know that Holmes wrote at least four monographs including one concerning cigar ash. That study permits Holmes to "distinguish at a glance the ash of any known brand, either of cigar or of tobacco." His knowledge of crime is encyclopedic, using the common threads of 1,000 crimes to unravel the mystery in the 1001st crime. Holmes's systematic study of crime provides the foundation for his work.

The tales within the Canon offer a number of common threads, but the stunning demonstration of observation and deductive reasoning, coupled with the joint benefit of attention to detail applied to encyclopedic knowledge, remain cornerstones. The combination works flawlessly and has produced an enduring impression of both Holmes and late Victorian England. The combination has also inspired extensive examinations of both Holmes's first interactions with his clients and every factual detail within Watson's records.

With this issue, the Hudson Valley Sciontists mark their introduction into the world of regular Sherlockian scion publications. Our goal is to offer to the reader a collection of articles and opinions that capture your attention from the outset. We have and will continue to select articles intended to stimulate those grey cells, while addressing issues that carry you back to the Canon and permit you to ponder aspects of the crime or Victorian England. At the same time, our paramount goal is to provide scholarship that offers a detailed examination of a question. In direct contrast to the social media memes of today (involving only 20 words and frequently misstating facts) the articles here and in future issues will scrutinize avenues of inquiry in detail and depth. Throughout, we shall play the Game with the solemnity of a county cricket match at Lords, but always mindful that some ideas now commonly held, such as the notion that Dr. Watson had married anyone other than Mary Morstan, were once viewed with incredulity and outrage. *See* Dorothy Sayers, *Unpopular Opinions,* "Dr. Watson, Widower" (Victor Gollancz 1946). In short, we trust that the language of each article will grab your attention and make it memorable, while the scholarship will insure that each issue is not only retained on your bookshelf, but sought as a research resource at a later date.

Please, enjoy our efforts and offer your own articles for consideration.

— *William Walsh*

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The Sign of the Four — Score, Watson and Small 1 each, Holmes and Tonga 0 each

By John Linsenmeyer

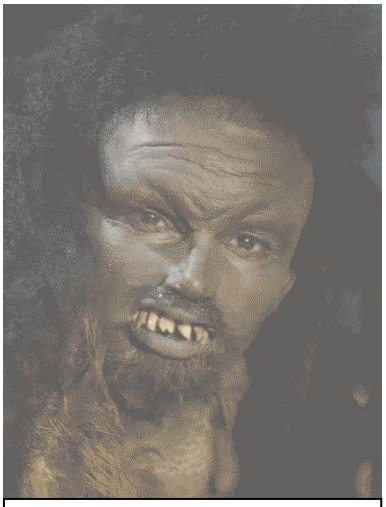
Some years ago, the prominent Holmesian Dr Julia Rosenblatt turned her scholar's eye on Jonathan Small's unattractive little sidekick Tonga, wondering who he was and "Why were they saying such terrible things about him?"[1] Using the best in anthropological and sociological research, Dr Rosenblatt established that Tonga could not possibly have been, as advertised by Jonathan Small, an Andaman Islander. The natives of those remote but salubrious isles are physically attractive, well-groomed people who "cut their hair whenever they have … scissors."[2] Their only weapon is the bow; they use neither blowguns nor poisoned projectiles.[3] To Julia's catalogue of Small's deceptions, I would only add the curious name: a 'tonga' is a small two-wheeled cart, drawn by a single horse, mule or donkey [4] so the name "Tonga" would be like calling a Toronto native "Pickup Truck."

So where to go from here? There is a well-known legal axiom *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, which allows — but does not require — one evaluating testimony or a confession or a story to disbelieve the entire thing if one significant element is patently false. Since the silly story of the imaginary Andaman Islander Pickup Truck or Tonga is, as Dr Rosenblatt showed, patently false, we are certainly invited at least to reconsider and test the credibility of the remainder of Jonathan Small's confession and Sherlock's consequent 'solution' to the mystery of the Agra Treasure and its purported disposition at the bottom of the Thames off the speeding steam launch Aurora. I submit that this inquiry will establish that the story is *falsus in omnibus*.

The Indian Army officers who dealt falsely with Small, according to his tale, were Major Sholto and Captain Morstan of the 34th Bombay Infantry, who were in charge of the guard in the prison colony in the Andaman Islands.[5] As of 1888 and surely before, though, British India's local military were, and remained up until Lord Kitchener's tenure as Commander in Chief-India, 19021909, divided among the Indian Empire's three Presidencies: Bengal, Bombay and Madras.[6] Yet the Andamans were in the Bengal, not Bombay, Presidency. Moreover, it was not 'done' in the mid to late 19th century to mix British with native prisoners.

And what of the other three in this Gang of Four? Small told the gullible Holmes that they were Sikhs, devotees of a monotheistic religion centred in northwestern India known for their martial prowess and hence much in demand as soldiers and policemen. All male Sikhs take the surname Singh, or 'lion.' Only one of the alleged four bears this Sikh surname but all three have conspicuously Muslim names: Mahomet [or 'Mohammed'] Singh, Dost Akbar and Abdullah Khan. Akbar the Great was a Moslem Moghul Emperor and Khan is an honorific title of Turkish origin given to rulers in Afghanistan and other Moslem Central Asian countries. Akbar and Mahomet are about as likely as names for Sikhs as Osama bin Laden and Abdul the Bulbul Amir are for boys being baptized in a Presbyterian Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Speaking of funny names, why did the retired Major Sholto of the Bombay Army name his house in London Pondicherry Lodge? It was one place in India with which an army officer would have had nothing to do: it was since the 18th century and remained until 1954 a French enclave on the Madras coast, across the subcontinent from Bombay. Well, the Sholtos seem to have been an odd lot, to judge by the surviving brother Bartholomew, a sniveling hypochondriac. But it is simply too much to believe Small's tale that the guards in the Andamans were Pathans. Less-suitable people could scarcely be imagined: unruly, violent, fanatical Moslem hillbillies from Afghanistan and the Northwest Frontier of Kiran Shah as Tonga in the 1987 Granada adaptation of Sign of the Four India.[7] It is no surprise that the vast majority of today's Taliban are Pathans, or "Pushtuns" as it is now fashionable to call them.[8] Again, the Northwest Frontier and The 'Stans' are a long way from The Andamans and the Pathans speak Pushtu, a language understood nowhere else in India.



Kiran Shah as Tonga

So the conclusion seems clear that Small's tale is almost entirely nonsensical. But where do we go from here? To be sure, it seems probable that: [A] a substantial treasure, the source of which no one then alive (except perhaps Small) knew first-hand, had been at Pondicherry Lodge; [B] after the death of Bartholomew Sholto, that treasure had been removed from the house; [C] although there was a possibility that a midget or child had been involved in Bartholomew's death, it was also possible that he had died of tetanus or some other natural cause; [D] no one had actually seen the treasure aboard the Aurora; and [E] the treasure was not in Small's possession when he was arrested. This arrest was, of course, followed by Small's nonsensical 'confession' to assorted crimes.

But why did he confess? I suggest that it was art and part of his plan to get away with it. To be sure he confessed but in a way that anyone even slightly more acquainted with India than Holmes and Athelney Jones would have laughed out loud. Can anyone doubt that, after all his exertions, the tale he told Holmes and Inspector Jones was simply to buy time so that while Small was in detention pending the realization that his 'confession' was nonsensical and his consequent release, his confederates could conceal, 'fence,' or otherwise dispose of the treasure. What is clear to me is that after all his exertions, the chance that Small threw the treasure into the Thames is about zero.

But suppose by some chance his 'confession' was taken seriously and charges were laid for murder? Watson obligingly gives a complete account of the conversations when Small was captured and something very important is missing. Even though he was patently in police custody — indeed, he was in handcuffs — Inspector Jones never gave him the caution required by English law[9], without which Small's 'confession' would have been inadmissible in evidence. So from the bare facts as recorded by Watson, it seems clear that Small got away with it. And good luck to him; he was a daring and resourceful old rogue who worked hard for what he got. Holmes admitted later that "he had been beaten four times, three times by men and once by a woman."[10] It would have been more gracious to give Small credit by name. So there we are: Small and Watson scored: one with the loot, one with a lovely wife; Holmes and the midget lost: one outsmarted, the other shot.

NOTES

[1] Baker Street Journal [New Series] vol. 25, no. 3 at pp. 140-141 (September 1975) ("Rosenblatt")

[2] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, The Andaman Islanders (NY, The Free Press, 1963) at p. 483

[3] Rosenblatt at p. 140; Radcliff-Brown at pp. 417-418 and 441

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[4] Yule and Burnell, Hobson-Jobson" a Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases, (London, John Murray, 1903) at p. 930

[5] The information in this paper on the Indian Army in the days of Queen-Empress Victoria can readily be verified by consulting any good history of the period. I particularly recommend, as well-written and lively, A Matter of Honour: an Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men, by Philip Mason (London, Jonathan Cape, 1974), especially Part IV "Soldiers of the Queen" at pp. 313-404. Also useful, in no particular order, are The Indian Army: the Guardians of British India 1822-1922, by T.A. Heathcote (London-Vancouver, David & Charles, 1974), Armies of the Raj, by Byron Farwell (New York, W W Norton, 1989), and Sword of the Raj, by Roger Beaumont (Indianapolis-New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1977).

[6] The boundaries of the three Presidencies of British India can easily be seen on any contemporary map. For the computer-facile, Wikipedia has a number of entries, including maps of all the time periods relevant to SIGN. For those who care about Lord Kitchener's tenure as Commander in Chief of British forces in India, and his outflanking the Viceroy, the "most superiour person" Lord Curzon, on various political fronts, see e.g. Eminent Victorian Soldiers by Byron Farwell (New York, W W Norton, 1985) at Chapter 8, especially pp. 336-340. Kitchener-haters will enjoy the terrific movie "Breaker Morant" in which he is portrayed badly, but this is to some extent a bum rap: he was simply enraged by the indiscipline of parts of his army in the Boer War, and the Australians were hands-down the worst.

[7] Pathans were recruited into the old Indian army, but only for service in the Moslem hills to which they were accustomed, e.g. in the Corps of Guides so admired by Kipling and in other elements of the Punjab Frontier Force such as the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles, the regiment of the late, great Sherlockian Lt. Col. T. F. "Freddie" Foss, BSI. At the times relevant to SIGN, the Punjab Frontier Force was not even part of the 'regular' Indian army; its commander reported to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab.

[8] Not strictly relevant, but perhaps of note: the two principal henchmen of the late [as of 5/1/2011] Osama bin Laden at his compound in Abbottabad were Pathans or Pushtuns.

[9] "Whenever a police officer has made up his mind to charge a person with a crime, he should first caution that person before asking him any questions …" (Judges Rules, r.4) "If the prisoner wishes to volunteer any statement, the usual caution should be administered." (Judge's Rules, r.4). 10 Halsbury's Laws of England, "Criminal Law," pp 471-472 (2d ed.)

[10] 'The Five Orange Pips.' Canadian Holmes .. Spring 2013

The Second Mrs. Watson

by Roger Donway

When I accepted the honor of proposing this canonical toast, I was not aware of the extensive literature regarding Dr. Watson's wives, and therefore I was not aware of the unhappiness that Dr. Watson's married life had brought him. [1]

There was, I have learned since, a first Mrs. Watson who died within fourteen months of assuming her title.[2] That was the Mrs. Watson of November '86 through December '87[3]. The Mrs. Watson of "Five Orange Pips." The Mrs. Watson who had a mother in England.[4] Dr. Watson's first marriage, to a sickly patient, ended in the lady's death, which was certainly a misfortune, though perhaps not unexpected. But Dr. Watson's second marriage, I am convinced, although he tells us merely of his "sad bereavement," ended in true tragedy.[5]

The Short Happy Life of Mary Watson

And yet it began with high romance. A woman who can lose the great Agra treasure in one moment and say "Thank God" in the next, because her poverty has brought her a husband, is not just romantic but a hyper-romantic. You will not find such a heroine in Jane Austen.[6] You *will* find her in Victor Hugo and Sir Walter Scott.

But what becomes of such a hyper-romantic lady when she must settle down as the wife of a hard-working doctor? For the answer, we need look no further than Emma Bovary. She seeks the excitement of a flirtation.

I am sorry to speak ill of any lady, but the psychological probability is confirmed by textual evidence. Consider this conversation between the Watsons, in response to a telegram from Holmes asking Watson to come to Boscombe Valley.

Mrs. Watson: What do you say, dear? Will you go?

Dr. Watson: I really don't know what to say. I have a fairly long list at present.

Mrs. Watson: Oh Anstruther would do your work for you.

...

Mrs. Watson: You have been looking a little pale lately. I think that the change would do you good...

Mrs. Watson: ... and you are always so interested in Mr. Sherlock Holmes' cases." [7]

You don't have to be a Sherlock Holmes to perceive that Mrs. Watson wants her husband out of town.

And then there is the fact that Mrs. Watson called her husband "James." If you can remember your years on the dating scene, you know that such slips of the tongue are inevitable when there is more than one "significant other" in your life.[8] Fortunately, single people can usually be honest about such slips. But Mrs. Watson could not. The first time such a slip of the tongue occurred, therefore, she probably made a joke of it, saying that she naturally needed two names for her husband because he was a divine duality: "two persons in one substance." He was John, the husband of Mary; but he was also James, the Boswell of Sherlock.[9] After that, she surely teased him with her joke about two names, to protect herself against future slips.

But all of this raises a question: Why could Mrs. Watson *not* be honest about her friendship with this James Whoever? We have no reason think that they were lovers.

Well, if you have read Anthony Trollope's 1869 novel *He Knew He Was Right*, you

will have seen how, in Victorian times, even the most innocent acquaintanceship between a married woman and a respectable bachelor could lead to marital disaster.

And this James fellow, I think, was *not* wholly respectable. He must have been the kind of fellow who would appeal to Mrs. Watson's hyper-romanticism: a dashing military man—of good breeding and education—but a bit of a rogue —a man who would talk to a lady about the primitive practices of foreign lands and the naughty doings of London's demimonde. Worse yet, I expect, he encouraged Mrs. Watson to talk about unseemly things, and to relate especially those stories about England's criminal underworld that she was gleaning from her husband's adventures with Sherlock Holmes.[10]

Frailty, thy name is woman. Holmes found, in Porlock, the weakest link in Moriarty's circle. Moriarty found, in the second Mrs. Watson, the weakest link in Sherlock Holmes's circle. And so, to exploit it, he sent his most trusted henchman: his brother Colonel James Moriarty.[11]

Of course, Holmes immediately sensed that there was a leak; and soon enough he knew where it was. No doubt, he privately warned Mrs. Watson about the character of her amiable companion. But infatuated ladies do not often listen to interfering friends. Notice, however, that Mrs. Watson absents herself when Sherlock Holmes comes to call. Evidently, she could no longer bear to face him.[12]

But she *did* continue her liaison — for two years. Which is to say: until the supposed death of Sherlock Holmes.

Dawning Awareness, Darkening Shadows

In the note that Holmes wrote at Reichenbach Falls, his final blessing was, of course, on Watson: "my dear fellow." But recall that his very last sentence also included this: "Pray give my greetings to Mrs. Watson."

How bizarre.

It's the sort of a banality one might toss into a hastily written postcard from a seaside resort. Yet Holmes, as he wrote, believed that he was poised at the brink of death, speaking his last words.

"Pray give my *greetings* to Mrs. Watson"? How on earth could Watson carry out such a commission?

"Hello dear! I'm home! Sherlock's dead! He says Hi!"

It's absurd.

No. Though Holmes was never romantic, he was always chivalrous. By his whole fatalistic tone in that letter—and then by his inclusion of that silly pro-forma courtesy — I believe that Holmes was trying to say (without being *overheard* to say) that he forgave Mrs. Watson.

Unfortunately, she could not forgive herself.[12]

No doubt, she held a final interview with Colonel Moriarty, in which he tried to depict Holmes as a monomaniac. But now she could see through the colonel's lies. No doubt, she followed intently the trial of the Moriarty gang, in order to understand just how much devilry she had abetted. And it must have made her utterly miserable.

Then, in the Spring of the following year, there fell a horrible conjunction of dates that completely unhinged the guilty mind of Mrs. Watson. May 4th, the first anniversary of Sherlock Holmes's death (as the world assumed), was *precisely* the tenth anniversary of the day she had read an advertisement in *The Times* saying that it would be to Miss Mary Morstan's advantage to come forward. To the hyper-romantic spirit of Mrs. Watson, such a coincidence of dates could be no coincidence. It had to be the workings of some Thomas Hardy-style destiny. [13]

And so, like the Romantic novelist she might have become, Mrs. Watson determined to close the circle of fate — on May 4, 1892 — joining in the Thames that fortune whose curse she had, briefly, imagined she could escape. [14]

In concluding my toast, therefore, I think that I cannot do better than employ the words a Victorian poet wrote for another lady who drowned herself in the Thames:

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
[But] leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour [15]

I ask you to join me in a toast to the unhappy Romantic who was: The Second Mrs. Watson.

NOTES

[1] William S. Baring-Gould says: "This view [that Watson married three times] is based on researches which demonstrate (conclusively to us, at least) that Watson married for the first time *circa* November 1, 1886" (*The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, vol. 1, p. 328). Baring-Gould bases his belief on the unfinished manuscript *Angels of Darkness*: "There, it will be recalled, Conan Doyle revealed that Watson had for a time practiced medicine in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. But more than that was revealed: as Mr. John Dickson Carr wrote in his *Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (italics ours [i.e., Baring-Gould's]): '*Either [Watson] had a wife before he wedded Mary Morstan*, or else he heartlessly jilted the poor girl whom he holds in his arms as the curtain falls on *Angels of Darkness*.' From what we know of Watson's character, it is unthinkable that he should have 'jilted the poor girl' and your editor is firm in his belief that the *first* Mrs. Watson was an American, a girl from San Francisco who was a patient of Watson's when he briefly practiced medicine there" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 328).

[2] In *The Valley of Fear* (Baring-Gould dates the events to January 1888 [Ibid., vol. 1, p. 471]), Watson is apparently unmarried and living at Baker Street. Says Baring-Gould: "The first Mrs. Watson died, probably in late December 1887, but very possibly early in January 1888, and Watson returned to Baker Street" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 330).

[3] Baring-Gould dates this adventure as running from Thursday, September 29, 1887, to Friday September 30, 1887 (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 389). And he has good reasons. Watson says that 1887 "furnished us with a long series of cases of greater or less interest," and he then proceeds to describe the adventure of "The Five Orange Pips" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 389 et seq). Thus, the implication is strong that it took place in that year. Moreover, Openshaw says it was in January 1885 that "my poor father met his end, and two years and eight months have elapsed since then" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 396). Thus, September 1887.

[4] In "The Five Orange Pips," Watson says: "My wife was on a visit to her mother's, and for a few days I was a dweller once more in my old quarters at Baker Street" (Leslie S. Klinger, *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, vol. 1, p. 135). This cannot be Mary Morstan, for she says, in *The Sign of the Four*, that her mother died before 1878 and she had no living relatives in England (Baring-Gould, vol. 1, p. 616). Hence, it must be a wife of Watson's prior to Mary Morstan.

[5] "In some manner, he had learned of my own sad bereavement, and his sympathy was shown in his manner rather than his words" (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 337). Baring-Gould dates this adventure to April 5, 1894 (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 329).

[6] Marianne Dashwood, of *Sense and Sensibility*, might seem an exception. But though she is a hyper-romantic, I would argue that she does not become an Austen

heroine until she has forsworn her Romantic sensibility for good English sense.

[7] Baring-Gould dates "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" as extending from Saturday, June 8, 1889, to Sunday June 9, 1889 (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 134).

[8] In "The Man with the Twisted Lip," Mrs. Watson says to Kate Whitney. "Now, you must have some wine and water, and sit here comfortably and tell us all about it. Or should you rather that I sent James off to bed?" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 369). Baring-Gould dates this adventure as running from Saturday, June 18, 1887, to Sunday, June 19, 1887 (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 368). If that were accurate, the wife in question would be the first Mrs. Watson. Baring-Gould notes, however, that he is the only commentator who places the adventure in 1887, and that "all others" accept Watson's statement that "it was in June, '89" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 368). I follow "all others."

[9] As early as "A Scandal in Bohemia," which Baring-Gould dates as running from May 20, 1887 to Mary 22, 1887, Holmes had taken to referring to Watson as "my Boswell" (Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 346, 351). Mrs. Watson's use of "James" when consoling Kate Whitney may signal her husband that Kate will not want her domestic tragedy recorded by Sherlock's Boswell.

[10] In *The Sign of the Four*, Sherlock Holmes warns Watson, as Watson is rushing off to tell Mary Morstan (and Mrs. Cecil Forrester) all about Holmes's latest discoveries: "I would not tell them too much. . . . Women are never entirely to be trusted—not the best of them" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 656. Watson interprets the remark as sheer misogyny: "I did not pause to argue over this atrocious sentiment" (Ibid.), and many commentators have followed Watson in seeing it that way. In fact, it may represent a specific insight into and warning about Miss Morstan's personality, softened by the concession to Watson's feelings that she is "the best" of women.

[11] Inasmuch as the cases cited here take place within the first two months of the Watsons' wedding, the time frame may seem too short for such a plot to unfold. But one need not assume that the plot against Mary was launched after her wedding. It may well have been launched immediately after the announcement of Watson's engagement, when Mary would be less likely to hold herself to the strict proprieties binding on a married woman. Then, when the thrill of the wedding had passed, a revival of the friendship would have seemed both perfectly natural and a welcome source of excitement.

[12] For example, at the beginning of "The Stockbroker's Clerk" Holmes calls on Watson just after breakfast in order to invite him on a case. Baring-Gould dates the adventure to June 15, 1889 (Baring-Gould, vol. 2, p. 153). It is apparently Holmes's first such visit since *The Sign of the Four,* and he pointedly inquires after Mrs. Watson. Yet we know that she does not come down to greet him, for when Watson accepts Holmes's invitation, Watson says that he "rushed upstairs to explain the matter to my wife, and joined Holmes upon the doorstep" (Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 153-54). Thus, Mrs. Watson passed up even a second chance to come down and say hello to Holmes.

[13] "About six years ago—to be exact, upon the 4th of May, 1882—an advertisement appeared in *The Times* asking for the address of Miss Mary Morstan, and stating that it would be to her advantage to come forward" (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 617). Baring-Gould believes that Watson's marriage to Mary Morstan took place circa May 1, 1889 (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 330). If he is correct, I think it is very probable that a woman of Miss Morstan's hyper-romanticism would have insisted on a wedding date of May 4th, which would then have made the date of Sherlock Holmes's death a triple conjunction of fate.

[14] Holmes's supposed death took place on May 4, 1891 (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 301). Watson spoke of his sad bereavement on April 5, 1894 (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 337). Thus, Mrs. Watson might have "closed the circle of fate" on either May 4, 1892, or May 4, 1893. I

believe it was the former. Had she survived the first anniversary of Holmes's death, with all the lamentable effects that its approach must have had on her husband, I believe she would have survived the second anniversary — which suggests, ironically, that she might have survived until Holmes's reappearance.

[15] Thomas Hood's "The Bridge of Sighs."

In Search of Sherlock Holmes: The Life of a Country Squire

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre

In the short story "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter," Sherlock Holmes tells Dr. Watson that his ancestors were "country squires." And other than that bit of information, along with the note that his grandmother was the sister of the French portraitist Vernet, Doyle provided little with respect to his most famous character's origins.

Knowing his father might have been country squire as well, however, provides insights into Holmes' social level and certain expectations common to those of his rank. A country squire would have owned enough land to rent to tenants and have lived in a manor house. While the squire's position was below a nobleman or large landowner, [1] he still ranked high in the local social structure.

In addition to running his estate and ensuring the welfare of those under his tenancy, the country squire also held the position of Justice of the Peace. In this capacity, the squire had both civil and legal duties. Within the local government, the justices supervised parish (or county) officials, in particular those in charge of the maintenance of roads and bridges and the enforcement of the Poor Laws. [2] As a legal position, Justices of the Peace served as magistrates during the Quarter Sessions, where they and a jury heard and decided on serious crimes such as theft, highway robbery, assault, burglary, rioting, drunkenness, profane swearing, and a variety of crimes against property (poaching, cutting estate timber and the like). Between these sessions, the justices held petty sessions where the least serious crimes were reviewed and decisions made without a jury. [3]

Because the English system did not include a prosecutor for almost all crimes, the preparation of a case rested with the constable, from collecting evidence to presenting it at trial. Justices of the peace supervised and worked closely with the village constable, issued warrants, and determined whether to move a case to trial and to which court. [4]

As a member of the gentry, Sherlock Holmes would have been in a position of privilege. If his father was a Justice of the Peace, he would have developed a familiarity with the criminal justice system and the law. For the consulting detective, the foundation for investigating and solving crimes would have come naturally to a descendant of country squires.

NOTES

[1] Daniel Pool, *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc ., 1993), 46.

[2] Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 90.

[3] "Victorian Crime and Punishment," accessed February 16, 2015. http://vcp.e2bn.org/

[4] J.J. Tobias, *Crime and Police in England: 1700-1900* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 125.

Mr. Holmes

A Review by Lou Lewis

I must admit to approaching this film with considerable trepidation. My Holmesian sensibilities had been badly bruised by Guy Ritchie and Robert Downey Jr. in *Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes – A Game of Shadows*. I was fully prepared to fall back upon the platitude "Well, anything that keeps green the memory of the Master." I had heard that several times about the Ritchie films and have even used it myself. After all, there is a natural reluctance to dump on anything Sherlockian – no matter how *outré*. It was, with a patent sigh of relief, therefore, that I entered into *Mr. Holmes*, the quiet world of director Bill Condon and eminent British actor Ian McKellen. The basic overlapping story lines are as follows: Holmes (Ian McKellen) resides with his housekeeper, Mrs. Munro (Laura Linney), a war widow, and her young son, Roger (Milo Parker) in Suffolk where he keeps bees. The film ventures backward and eastward, revisiting a 30-year-old case and a more recent sojourn in Japan. In London just after World War I, Holmes trails a married woman (Hattie Morahan) whose husband (Patrick Kennedy) suspects her of taking illicit music lessons. In Japan, he meets with an amateur herbalist (Hiroyuki Sanada) with a family secret. Back home, Holmes struggles with his growing forgetfulness, tends his hives and encourages Roger's dreams and ambitions, which are thwarted by Mrs. Munro's narrow, anxious mindset.

Some have criticized the various plot lines as too complex and confusing. I thought them clever and well dramatized. Also, the presence of multiple plot lines gave a "modern" quality to the production. And although one would perhaps have preferred Holmes in pursuit of a juicy murder, the story of the war widow and her son, set in the most bucolic south coast of England, has palpable warmth and cinematic beauty. The flashback to Japan and dealing with a family secret there lends a touch of the exotic very familiar to Sherlockians.

Beyond plot and setting is the understated, but nuanced performance, of McKellen. He is entirely credible as an aged Sherlock; a tad world weary but with flashes of the expected brilliance. Clearly age has mellowed The Master who is deeply moved by the plight of young Roger whom he teaches to care for bees at the farmhouse. He also displays great empathy in dealing with the amateur herbalist from Japan –- to such an extent that he ultimately opts not to destroy an erroneous family story with the truth and instead opts to give the facts a Watsonian gloss.

Finally, McKellen as Holmes is well paired with the formidable Laura Linney as Mrs. Monro. Linney is a three-time Academy Award nominee and three-time Tony award nominee. This writer first encountered her talent in *You Can Count On Me* – a film that was very well received by critics and had two Oscar Nominations. Linney, playing Holmes' housekeeper in this film, is more than a successor to Mrs. Hudson and has ample scope to display her considerable acting skills.

A very successful adaptation of Mitch Cullin's 2005 book *A Slight Trick of the Mind*. And the screenplay by Jeffery Hatcher is also notable. Hatcher was the guest speaker at the annual meeting of the Baker Street Irregulars this January and is an expert on Sherlock Holmes in film. He is also the author of a play *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club*, 2011 (premiered at Arizona Theatre Company)

The Musgrave Ritual: What Was in the Box?

By Harrison Hunt

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In "The Musgrave Ritual," the Musgrave family carefully hid a box containing what was described in the story as "the ancient crown of the kings of England [that] once encircled the brows of the royal Stuarts." It is clear from Holmes's narrative that the "battered and shapeless diadem" that was found in the box along with some coins from the reign of Charles I had been that monarch's crown, which had been deposited for safekeeping with the Musgraves after Charles's beheading in 1649 during the English Civil War, to be held until his heir was restored to the throne. But precisely which crown it was, and why Brunton considered it worth risking his job and, ultimately, his life, has remained something of a mystery.

There are three possible pieces of royal headgear that could have met the description of the crown quoted above. The first was the crown of Scotland, which had been used there by the Stuarts since 1540, when it was refashioned from an older diadem. While it clearly met the requirement that it had encircled the brows of the royal Stuarts, it could not have been the crown that Brunton discovered for one simple reason: It still exists as part of the Honours of Scotland. Although it does not solve the Sherlockian question of what was in the Musgraves' box, it is still of importance to students of the Canon. The Literary Agent, good Scotsman that he was, was certainly aware that during the English Civil War, the crown had been hidden to keep it from being seized by Oliver Cromwell's men … wrapped in a linen cloth and buried under the floor of the church in Kinneff, Scotland. That crown was treated better than the one the Musgraves guarded, though, periodically unearthed and aired out to prevent it from being affected by the damp. [1]

A second possibility was the Crown of St. Edward, which had been used for the coronations of English kings for generations. It was described in 1672 as having been "an ancient crown" weighing two pounds, one ounce and bearing "one fair diamond," 13 other diamonds, 10 rubies, one emerald, one sapphire and 70 pearls. Like virtually all of the English crown jewels, this historic artifact was ordered destroyed by Oliver Cromwell, who sold its jewels and either sold its gold framework or had it melted down for coins. This was the diadem that Sherlockian Nathan Bengis felt was held by the Musgraves. Bengis proposed that it was made of gilded silver, which would account for why it wasn't melted for coinage and why it turned black while buried. [2] (It should be noted that, while pure gold will not tarnish, gold alloys can, indeed, corrode and discolor over time due to the other metals in their compositions.) [3]

St. Edward's Crown was used exclusively for the monarch's coronation, and afterward stored at Westminster Abbey. During the rest of his reign the king utilized a different crown, which is the third of our possibilities. During Charles I's time, it was the crown made for Henry VIII. As befit this larger than life monarch, it was indeed impressive. Fashioned from more than six and a half pounds of gold, it was decorated with enamel work and 58 rubies, 28 diamonds, 21 sapphires, 2 emeralds and 233 pearls. This was the crown that Charles I used on a regular basis, as seen in his 1631 portrait by Daniel Mytens. [4] Given its size, value and connection to Charles, I believe this is the crown in the Musgraves' box.

Crown of Henry VIII

Like St. Edward's Crown, this royal headgear was broken up by Cromwell's men, the jewels "sold off in mixed packets" and the gold sent to the mint for coinage. It is entirely possible that some of Charles's supporters secretly purchased most or all of the jewels and even were able to buy some of the crown's framework, battered and shapeless as it then was.

We can get an idea of how impressive this crown was as it was re-created in 2012 for display at Hampton Court Palace. No wonder Brunton was tempted! (A fascinating video of the work involved in re-crafting the crown is available at http://www. theguardian.com culture/2012/oct07/henry-viii-crown-recreated.)

A couple of questions remain to be answered. Given the size and ornate decoration of the crown, why was so little found in the bag fished from the Musgraves' mere? It is possible that that was all Charles's cavaliers were able to obtain from Cromwell's sale. It is also possible that years before Brunton someone else had solved the riddle and helped himself to most of the jewels. But I like to think that Rachel Howells, "of whom nothing was ever heard," threw the bag and a few items in the pond as a red herring and made off with most of the treasure herself, using it to get "away out of England to some land beyond the seas" and completing her revenge against her faithless fiancé.

Finally, there is the issue of ownership. At the end of the story, it is revealed that "after some legal bother and some considerable expense" the Musgrave family was able to keep the contents of the box for themselves. Some critics have questioned how they could have claimed ownership of the property of the Crown, but as it had been sold in the seventeenth century by the then legitimate government of the nation, the Crown no longer held title. Nathan Bengis may have unintentionally settled the matter in 1953 when he firmly stated that "the crown was … no more negotiable than London Bridge" … which, the reader will recall, is currently located in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

NOTES

[1] www.royal.gov.uk/MonarchUK/Symbols/TheHonoursofScotland.aspx; www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/The-Honours-of-Scotland

[2] www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/crown_jewels.htm; Elias Ashmole, *The Entire Ceremonies of the Coronations of His Majesty King Charles II ….* (c1672; reprinted London: W. Owen, 1761), Appendix 3, "An Account of the Ancient Regalia, which were Destroyed and Dissipated, in the Time of the Commonwealth," 42-43, at www.quod.lib.umich.edu; Nathan Bengis, "Whose Was It?" *Baker Street Journal* 3 (April 1953), 69-76. This article was followed by Maj. Gen. H.D.W. Sitwell, "Some Notes on St. Edward's Crown and the Musgrave Ritual" on pages 77-82.

[3] See, e.g., David A. Scott, "The Deterioration of Gold Alloys and Some Aspects of their Conservation," *Studies in Conservation* 28 (1983), 194-203, at www.nautarch.tamu.edu

[4] http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/oct/07/henry-viii-crown-recreated.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's *Mycroft Holmes*

By Dana Galvin

I've long been a fan of derivative or "fan" fiction: Reading Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" was an earth-shattering (or world-building) experience. Therefore, I am rather predisposed to think any novel that takes a character other than Sherlock Holmes and John Watson and runs with them is worth my time. Far be it from me to say that Mycroft Holmes is "minor" in any way; reading a treatment of him is a specific pleasure. I'd like to think that, even without the star power of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, I would have been drawn to his *Mycroft Holmes*. In any case, I'm very glad I was.

Brother Mycroft has enjoyed an elevated status in both the BBC's "Sherlock" and CBS' "Elementary," so I was slightly less shocked than I might have been previously by Abdul-Jabbar and co-author Anna Waterhouse's decision to focus on him. Here, however, we have a properly youthful Mycroft, fresh out of University, newly minted as the Secretary of State for War, and full of verve. Yes, this Mycroft is no sedentary Jupiter — he's out and about, on adventures, punching his little brother in the nose when it's warranted. Mycroft is also in love, which makes for a charming turn for the traditionally sober character.

The mystery is engaging with hints of the supernatural; the writing is lush without being indulgent. I appreciated the fact that it's Mycroft being called "Holmes," while Sherlock is relegated to first name, second status. The pacing is ideal: Abdul-Jabbar and Waterhouse combine the right amount of historical detail with rousing action to create an exceptionally entertaining story. Mycroft's best friend, Cyrus Douglas, is an excellent character in his own right, and much more than a tacked-on companion. My greatest disappointment came at the end of the novel: As Mycroft is now positioned to become the character we readers of the Canon recognize, I wanted more time with Abdul-Jabbar and Waterhouse's rendering of him. I wanted to read more about this Mycroft, still learning and absorbing the world around him, eternally young and full of promise.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

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