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"You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson,
but I am sure that it never occurred to you that you were receiving news of your friend."

Contents

Editor's Desk	1
FOSH Annual Meeting	1
The Explorers' Annual Dinner	2
Dinner Toasts	4
BSI Distinguished Speaker's Lecture (1)	6
BSI Distinguished Speaker's Lecture (2)	7
2022 BSI Dinner	7
Conanical Cousin Romances	8
Baker Street West	10
Study Group: BLAN	11
Book Review	12
A Scandal in Austin	12
Early Sherlockian Studies	13
Parting Words and Trifles	14

Editor's Desk

It has been a busy time for many of us since the previous issue last November. Many of those events that Norwegian Explorer members have experienced are covered in this present issue. These include Study Group sessions, the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections annual meeting, our own Annual Dinner, the New York Birthday festivities, the Baker Street West summary of the time in New York, local publications, and a visit to Austin, MN. One of the highlights from New York was the Investiture of fellow Explorers Tim Johnson ("Theophilus Johnson"), Rob Nunn ("Elementary") and Jim Hawkins ("The Hans Sloane of My Age").

Our thanks to Mike Eckman, Pj Doyle, Ruth Berman, and Karen Murdock for writing articles to share. We hope that you enjoy them and, if anyone has any interest in writing about their own Sherlockian experiences, we'd love to receive anything that you have to offer. 

FOSH Annual Meeting

There is a deep-rooted connection between the Norwegian Explorers and the Sherlock Holmes Collections housed at the Elmer L. Andersen Library on the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus. The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections (FOSH) was formed in 1995 by several Norwegian Explorers to increase exposure of the Collections and to provide recommendations for its growth.

The group holds an annual meeting in the fall. This year it was on Tuesday, November 16th, and there were 39 participants in the virtual meeting. It commenced with introductory remarks by Tim Johnson, the Curator of Special Collections & Rare Books and E.W. McDiarmid Curator of the Collections. This was followed by a fantastic presentation by Steve Mason who talked about the History of the Barque Lone Star. Steve also provided a written version of the history which appeared in the December 2021 issue of the Collections' newsletter (Volume 25, Number 4).

Following that, Gary Thaden, as the group's president, gave a brief history of the Friends group, Julie McKuras provided an update on the newsletter (she is the editor and a primary writer), and Tim Johnson outlined the Collections finances.

Each year an award is presented for the best article in the past year's newsletters. This is the Bryce L. Crawford, Jr. Award, which is chosen with the assistance of Steve Stillwell. For this year there were two prizes given, both in recognition of two of the many prominent Sherlockians we have lost recently. One was to Evelyn Herzog for her moving tribute to Susan Rice (in the December 2020 issue) and the other was to Dan Stashower

(Continued on page 13)

The Explorers' Annual Dinner

BY PHILLIP BERGEM

Forty-two Explorers and guests assembled at the Minneapolis Golf Club in St. Louis Park for our Annual Meeting and Dinner, held on Thursday, December 2nd. The attendance was down from previous years due to concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, but the folks assembled were required to be fully vaccinated. As we were all eating and drinking, however, it was not practical to remain masked. The Golf Club staff did their usual wonderful job and even the weather cooperated, with no snow and mild temperatures, unlike the situation in all too many years.

Festivities kicked off at 6:30 with drinks from the cash bar, great conversation, and the joy of being together in-person again. After people found their seats for dinner and grabbed some of the British-themed buffet food there were the round of toasts, organized by Steve Schier. The first was by Mary Loving; a great toast to Lestrade sung to the tune of "When a Felon's Not Engaged in His Employment" (also known as "A Policeman's Lot is Not a Happy One") from *The Pirates of Penzance*. Ray Riethmeier was not able to attend due to a last-minute complication, but he was able to provide his toast to Langdale Pike for Steve to read to the captivated audience. Following that, Erica Fair presented a toast to the vital (but underappreciated) canonical character, Stamford. Phil Bergem gave a toast to his BSI Investiture namesake, Birdy Edwards, and that section of the evening's program was rounded out by Karen Ellery toasting *The Woman*.

The next item on the program was the Business Meeting, conducted by President Tom Gottwalt. This began with Tom recognizing the first-time attendees and then summarizing the year's events for the group. Appreciation was expressed to the hard-working Study Group leaders who run one of the most popular events that we have. The financial report was presented somewhat ineptly by Treasurer Phil Bergem, who had prepared notes to read from but forgot them at home and had to rely on a faulty memory. The essence of the message was that the group is doing well and was in a position to make a \$221 donation to the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota; this was accepted by Tim Johnson.

The slate of candidates for Officers of the group was announced by Mike McKuras, consisting of the usual suspects: the officers from the



Phil Bergem, Tim Johnson, and Tom Gottwalt.

Photo by Monica Schmidt.

prior year. Hearing no additional nominations from the floor, there was a vote for the full slate which passed with a boisterous vocal vote.

Following the Business Meeting was the presentation of the Sigerson Awards. These go to each person who contributed a piece for the Norwegian Explorers *Christmas Annual*, a copy of which was given to each attendee at the Dinner. The award names, each relevant to the contribution, were brilliantly devised by Julie McKuras. The awards for 2021 were:

- "Excessive, a Little Violent, and Unnatural": Animal Transplants and Rejuvenation Medicine in the 1920s" by Erica Fair – The "Secret of Rejuvenescence and the Elixir of Life" Award (CREE).
- "Sherlock Holmes's Calling" by David Forest Hitchcock – The "Subtle Power of Inference" Award (RESI).
- "The Fog Makes a Lasting Impression" by Bob and Lucy Brusic – The "Swirl Still Drifting Past Us" Award (BRUC).
- "Sherlock Holmes: The Nobel Bachelor?" by Michael Eckman – The "As Brilliant a Record" Award (SILV).
- "Why Henry Ward Beecher?" by Bob Sharfman – The "Singular Gifts" Award (FINA).
- "Ethics and Pseudoscience in the Sherlockian Canon" by Barbara Rusch – The "It's Devilish" Award (DEVI).
- "Sherlock Holmes in Retirement" by David Forest Hitchcock – The "Remarkable Narrative" Award (EMPT).
- "Diagnosing the Word Search" by Melissa Aho – The "Most Intricate Analysis" Award (SIGN).
- "Sherlock Holmes: The Very Model of a Modern Social Scientist" by Steven Schier – The "Little Empty Attic" Award (STUD).

- “Mycroft Holmes: 6-1-2” by Bruce Harris – The “Ornament to Any Anthropological Museum” Award (HOUN).
- “Holmes & the Birth of American CSI” by Jeff Falkingham – The “Founded Upon the Observation of Trifles” Award (BOSC).
- “Sherlock Holmes and the Philosopher’s Stone” by Michael Eckman – The “You Know My Methods” Award (CROO).
- “The Case of the Darwin Denying Duo” by John Ward – The “Wicked Scheme to Wreck” Award (PRIO).
- “Science: Something New Under the Sun?” by Diane Gilbert Madsen – The “Question of Imagination” Award (HOUN).
- “The Enigma of Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D.: Gender and Racial Discrimination in Medicine in His Sherlockian and Non-Sherlockian Writings?” by Donny Zaldin – The “Whole Truth of It” Award (CARD).
- “Science and Medicine” by Art Hogenson – The “Education Never Ends” Award (REDC).
- “The Deadly Cure” by Julie McKuras – The “Painful and Lingering Disease” Award (ENGI).
- “The Mystery of Reichenbach Falls” by Christopher Atkinson – The “Fearful Place” Award (FINA).
- “Professor and Colonel” by Ruth Berman – The “His Zeal for Certain Studies” Award (STUD).

Following that frivolity there was a more somber moment; our Stand Upon the Terrace for those Explorers who have died in the past year. Dick Sveum talked about the contributions and legacies of Randy Cox and Jon Lellenberg, and John Bergquist talked about Mike Whelen. Gary Thaden made a presentation for someone who wasn’t an Explorer, but had recently passed away and deserved acknowledgement for her contributions to the Sherlockian world: Carol Nelson Douglas.

Then it was time for the evening’s guest speaker. Geoffrey M. Curley is one of the driving forces behind *The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes*. Julie McKuras has worked closely with him in an effort to get the Exhibition to Minnesota, and it was she who introduced him for the evening. His presentation was titled “Designing Sherlock Holmes.” Geoff told the group, in a very entertaining manner, how the idea of the Exhibition was developed. They worked closely with Jon Lellenberg and the Conan Doyle Estate. Exhibit Development Group, which is based in Saint Paul,

also worked with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), the Hennepin County Medical Examiner’s Office and Tim Johnson at the U of M. The exhibit is broken up into sections, one showing artifacts related to Sherlock Holmes, including several on loan from the Special Collections, an area that shows how forensics works, and a recreation of the sitting room. Participants are invited to work on solving a mystery, which Dan Stashower helped to write. The group was looking to develop the most authentic 221B Study ever, and many who have seen it feel that they have succeeded.

Geoff emphasized the items that were loaned from the Collections by Tim and the U of M. Other



Geoffrey M. Curley

items on display include props from Warner Brothers that were used in the movies starring Robert Downey, Jr., from the BBC’s *Sherlock* series, and from CBS’s *Elementary* show. It was a wonderful and engaging presentation, and the audience was very appreciative. The *International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes* is scheduled to be at the Minnesota History Center in Saint Paul, starting in October 2022. (It was postponed from last October

and specific details are presently subject to change due to the Covid circumstances.) Our sincere thanks to Geoff for the time he spent with the Explorers.

Raffle tickets had been handed out and a number of drawings were done to hand out a variety of small Holmes-themed prizes. As is tradition, the evening concluded with a recitation of “When I Spend a Long Evening with Holmes,” again this year by Lindsay Hall, to send the members off into the night. 🐾

Dinner Toasts

Mary Loving — “Lestrade’s Lament”

(Sung to the tune of “When a Felon’s Not Engaged in His Employment” from *The Pirates of Penzance*.)

When Lestrade is well engaged in his employment
By creating many felons’ disregard
His capacity for satisfied enjoyment
Is as good as any man at Scotland Yard
The only fly that sticks within his ointment
With constabulary duties to be done
“Sherlock Holmes is better” is his disappointment
An Inspector’s lot is not a happy one
With constabulary duties to be done, to be done
An Inspector’s lot is not a happy one

When considering his given occupation
Watching Sherlock Holmes’s mastery with crime
Makes Lestrade have just one ongoing frustration
Knowing that the braggart beats him all the time
But in spite of that he has a grudging respect
Holmes’s methods always make him number one
Lestrade’s reputation suffering to protect
An Inspector’s lot is not a happy one
With constabulary duties to be done, to be done
An Inspector’s lot is not a happy one

In conclusion let us give Lestrade some credit
It’s not easy being cast in such a light
Overshadowed by the Master you can bet it
As a functionary copper, he’s all right!
With some admiration let us raise our glass up
As Inspectors go, he’s not the only one
Holmes had said he is “a pick of a bad lot”
An Inspector’s lot is not a happy one
With constabulary duties to be done, to be done
An Inspector’s lot is not a happy one

Ray Riethmeier — “A Scandalous Toast to Langdale Pike” (Read by Steve Schier at the Dinner)

It’s important for everyone to recognize their own limitations. For myself, I know that my talents are better turned toward editing than to writing, so when I was asked to draft a toast for our august gathering this evening, it gave me pause.

What if I blew it? What if my toast was *so bad* that it had tongues wagging across the entire Sherlockian community? Would I live down the gossip? Would the Norwegian Explorers survive the scandal? So, when I was asked to give a toast, let’s say that I was unenthusiastic.

Until... I realized that I could draw a parallel to The Great Detective himself, who also had to recognize his own limits. *[pause for audible gasp]*

Watson attempted to describe the scope of Holmes’s knowledge in the well-remembered beginning of *A Study in Scarlet*. In Chapter 2, Watson declares that Holmes’s knowledge of several topics were “nil” or “feeble”; topics such as Literature, Philosophy, Astronomy, and Politics.

When Holmes was lacking information relating to such subjects in which he did not have a comprehensive knowledge already, he would turn to his bookshelves, or he’d send out the Irregulars to gather information. But one subject area that Watson omitted from his list was “Gossip,” or “Social Scandal.”

For this, Holmes had a unique source of information, the “strange, languid creature” Watson describes in “The Adventure of the Three Gables,” Mister Langdale Pike, who:

was the receiving station, as well as the transmitter, for all the gossip of the Metropolis. He made, it was said, a four-figure income by the paragraphs which he contributed every week to the garbage papers which cater for an inquisitive public. If ever, far down in the turbid depths of London life, there was some strange swirl or eddy, it was marked with automatic exactness by this human dial upon the surface.

Yes, Langdale Pike was the sort of man who would know what happens at social gatherings of a type like our Norwegian Explorers Annual Dinner, and what depths of scandal, what gossip might ensue (particularly if I say the wrong thing in my toast)! Gossip! Scandal! This very event is the sort of thing in which Holmes (like myself) knew he’d be out of his depths, so Langdale Pike was the man to call!

So please join me as we toast together using Sherlock Holmes’s own words: “Watson, this is a case for Langdale Pike!”

Erica Fair — Stamford

Good evening and thank you all for joining us tonight. My name is Erica Fair and I was asked to speak this evening as a newcomer to the Norwegian Explorers. I thought, what better introduction could there be, but to honor the character who, by a stroke of serendipity, managed to create nothing short of a literary Big Bang. Without this man, there would be no gathering tonight, no particular reason to celebrate, no stories for us to share together. For without this man, the names “Sherlock Holmes” and “Dr. John Watson” would carry no significance to us. And to each other, they

would have forever remained two unhappy strangers in a crowded, dangerous city. Luckily for them, and all of us, fate intervened in the guise of a humble surgical assistant. In keeping with our theme of medical men and science, as well as on behalf of new friends and new connections, tonight I propose a toast to Stamford, whose brief appearance in *A Study in Scarlet* nevertheless gave rise to one of the greatest literary teams that the world has ever known.

You may recall that Watson's encountering Stamford at all was a moment of sheer coincidence, as was Stamford having overheard Holmes's complaints about the rental market the day before. With an open heart and a spirit of kindness, Stamford sees our good doctor struggling in a depressive rut, and takes the time to recognize and commiserate with his former colleague, despite even Watson admitting that the two had not really been friends. Just a few pages later, Stamford takes the reader's hand as he leads Watson and all of us on our very first adventure: to meet a most unusual, inexpressible, knotty problem of a man. Stamford leads us through the hospital halls, telling increasingly bizarre stories and stoking our interest in the enigmatic man we're about to meet. He makes a simple introduction, witnesses the meeting without any clue of its future significance, and then takes his leave forever, never to return to our pages.

At first, Stamford seems no different than any other single-story character, who enters and exits as the narrative requires. The poor fellow isn't even given the dignity of a first name, and he is hustled offstage as soon as his purpose has been served. But of course, his impact is seismic. Without Stamford, there is no beginning, no stories, no great partnership. But for his innate friendliness, warmth, and openness to others' eccentricities, the world might know of Sherlock Holmes as a minor footnote in forensic science at best, and of Dr. John Watson as just another lost soldier, a late-term casualty of a long-forgotten war. Fortunately, Stamford took the time out of his own day to listen to each man in need, and saw an opportunity that neither would have ever chanced to encounter otherwise. From a simple act of kindness that any one of us might have done ourselves, magnificence emerged.

My fellow friends and colleagues, it is extraordinary how far the ripples of our actions can reach, especially when it comes to forging connections like those that bring us together tonight.

Stamford serves as an eternal reminder that we can never know entirely for sure what a small gesture of warmth might accomplish, or what a simple chance of luck might someday set in motion, and that a moment of empathy can bring forth miracles. Thank you for being part of this great organization and for welcoming all like me who share your fascination with this world.

I ask you now to raise your glass and join me in a toast to our very first acquaintance in the canon, the man who first led Watson and all of us into a unique, unforgettable world that we never expected would so utterly delight and consume us. To Stamford!

Phil Bergem — Birdy Edwards

The subject of my toast is complicated, but admittedly dear to my heart. He is a man of mystery, going by several names, but remaining true to his original code. To add to the complicated nature, there is also the real person whom the Canonical person is based on.

I am speaking of Birdy Edwards, the essential protagonist of *The Valley of Fear*. He was a rough and tumble man out to get a job done. Honorable and fearless, a man of integrity, intelligence, and grit. Granted, reality may not have been so clear-cut, but without him we wouldn't have one of the adventures of Watson and Holmes.


So, please join me in raising a glass to Birdy Edwards, Pinkerton agent extraordinaire.

Karen Ellery — *The Woman*

I think most of us here have enjoyed some fictional characters so much that we want more of them than the writers provided. Now, those who are talented, or obsessed, or possibly both, may write their own pastiches featuring these characters; but if we are lucky, we find someone has done the hard work for us. And if we are *really* fortunate, the person will be a good writer whose breadth of imagination for our beloved character matches or even surpasses our own. One such writer was Carole Nelson Douglas, who passed quite recently, and who had become one of the best-known and most respected biographers of a particular Sherlockian character beloved by me and, I think, many others here — Irene Adler. Through Douglas's books, I got to spend more time with and learn so much more about Adler, and Adler was given a fuller life of friendships, love, and adventures. I know some Sherlockians have little time



Minnesotans in New York — Tim Johnson, John Bergquist, Phil Bergem, Julie McKuras, Dick Sveum, Inez Bergquist, Pj Doyle, Jennifer Olson, Ray Riethmeier, Mike Eckman. Photo by Chris Zordan.

or interest in pastiches, and I admit they are not all created equal. However, some characters simply demand to have their stories told, and I am glad Ms. Douglas was called to tell Adler's. So now, regardless of whether we toast the Irene Adler of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Carole Nelson Douglas, or our own imaginations, I give you *The Woman*.

Editor's Note: We are blessed with two reports from the BSI Distinguished Speaker's Lecture.

2022 BSI Distinguished Speaker's Lecture (Take 1)

BY MICHAEL V. ECKMAN

In her 2022 BSI Distinguished Speaker's Lecture, Mary Bendel-Simso talked about Sherlock Holmes's connection to and relationship with the police. In the lecture she might have referenced all 60 Holmes stories. Dr. Bendel-Simso is a professor of English at McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland, and is an expert in the history of detective and mystery fiction. Leslie Klinger introduced her and commented that "she gets to teach crime fiction — how cool is that."

Mary noted that police forces were 19th century inventions and the British police were first


conceived as members of a crime prevention force. Only in 1878 was the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) formed to solve crimes. Unlike Holmes, early police detectives were not trained, giving Holmes an advantage.

In his early cases, before his reputation was made, Holmes cooperated with the police. As Holmes's reputation grew and his cases became more international, the relationship with the police became more complicated. Mary noted that "Sometimes, the good of the country trumped the good of Scotland Yard."

As the years passed, Holmes competed with Lestrade but mentored Martin and Hopkins. Holmes also aided some local police in their competition with Scotland Yard. In some of the last recorded cases, Holmes did not deal with the police at all and sometimes sided with the criminal. Mary commented that "sometimes the law was as dangerous as the criminal." Holmes did have the advantage that, not being part of the official force, he could be discrete and keep matters private. Also, Holmes could use "irregular" police methods, such as breaking and entering.


Mary pointed out that Holmes's relation to the police changed over 40 years not only because all relationships change with time, but because of societal and legal changes over this same period. Doyle's involvement in several real cases over the

years also affected how Holmes's relationship with the police was reflected in the stories.

Mary Bendel-Simso and Leroy Lad Panek are co-editors of the online *The Westminster Detective Library* and have also co-edited *Essential Elements of the Detective Story, 1820–1891*, and *Early American Detective Stories: An Anthology*. 

2022 BSI Distinguished Speaker's Lecture (Take 2)

BY PJ DOYLE

he year 2022 dawned with its own set of challenges and opportunities for Sherlockians. The annual birthday celebration returned to a variation of its former self, as those who dared faced off with the pandemic and headed to New York. The brave (or foolish) were rewarded with some old and a few new ways to gather.

The core Baker Street Irregulars "official" events — The Distinguished Speaker Lecture and the BSI Annual Dinner — returned to in-person, masked gatherings.


The Lecture was held on Thursday, January 13th, moved to the Westin Grand Central and featured Professor Mary Bendel-Simso. "My Dear Watson, the law is as dangerous to us as the criminals: Sherlock Holmes and the Official Police." (Her paper will be published in the *Baker Street Journal* later this year.)

Since its inception in 1998, there have been 23 distinguished speakers. Les Klinger introduced Bendel-Simso, who is a professor of English at McDaniel College. An expert on the history of detective and mystery fiction, she and previous Distinguished Speaker Leroy Lad Panek are co-editors of *The Westminster Detective Library*. They have also co-edited *Essential Elements of the Detective Story, 1890–1891*.

Bendel-Simso did her Sherlockian homework and connected her


observations to the Canon as she considered the difference between capture versus detection and the freedom that Holmes enjoyed as he focused on the latter.

I was struck by her description of public reaction to the sight of the official police. "The mere sight of those fellows seals lips." On the other hand, Holmes's Baker Street Irregulars had the luxury to "go everywhere, see everything." Fortunately, those in attendance, had the luxury to meet and learn from Professor Bendel-Simso.

(Note: In his discussion of the history of the Lecture series, Klinger noted that previous speakers who are Grand Masters of the Mystery Writers of America and BSI members include Sara Paretsky, Vincent Starrett, Frederic Dannay (the BSI half of Ellery Queen), Rex Stout, and now Laurie King. King was awarded the honor for 2022 and will be a special guest at the 2022 Bouchercon in Minneapolis in September 2022.) 

2022 BSI Dinner

BY MICHAEL V. ECKMAN

had been warned that the BSI Dinner could be a long affair, and the 2022 version — which was my first — did not disappoint. Wiggins Michael Kean stated near the end of the dinner that since we had traveled so far and made a special effort to attend that he wanted to make it worth our while. But who

can complain about being confined in the stately Yale Club (a statue of Nathan Hale, Yale class of 1773 in the lobby) with a group of Sherlockians, an open bar, and good food?

But first, the evening began, after a chilly walk from the hotel, with the required proof of vaccination, a standard of the weekend. Then coat check, small wood paneled elevator to 22nd floor, and rooftop (fortunately sheltered) reception. Conversation



Tim Johnson and Pj Doyle.
Photo by Julie McKuras.

flowed and the two bartenders were kept busy. The hors d'oeuvres were tasty with the crab cakes and beef Wellington my favorites. I met some other first timers as well as veterans. In my conversations, I found that our triennial conferences do have a very favorable reputation.

Jennifer Olson was named "*The Woman*," and Julie McKuras's tribute was well received. We proud Minnesotans gathered around Jennifer for a photo before she was whisked away to dine with the other "Women."



Jennifer Olson & Inez Bergquist — The Women.
Photo by Chris Zordan.

Down to the 20th floor ballroom, with its high decorative ceilings and stately columns along the walls, for dinner. After brief introductions, John Bergquist announced the Eddie Award winners. The toasts included a new view of Mrs. Hudson as a blonde bombshell, a criticism of Mycroft for his mistakes, applying the name "Mrs. Calabash" to Watson's second wife, an appreciation of Holmes, and a salute to an old irregular. The Stand Upon the Terrace had a special recognition of Mike Whelan and the retirement of his investiture, Vincent Spaulding.

Ray Betzner spoke about Vincent Starrett and his importance to the Irregulars despite the fact that Starrett attended only one of the Birthday Dinners. Ira Matetsky followed with an appreciation of Rex Stout who attended 20 dinners, had the reputation of presiding in an efficient manner, and was given the first Two Shilling Award.

The musical interlude was "The Gold Queen's Revenge" sung to the tune of "Bridge over Troubled Water." In the song, Marie Gibson plots the framing of governess Grace Dunbar and sings "At Thor Bridge over darkened waters / I will lay me down."

The Birthday Honors included Tim Johnson (Theophilus Johnson) among the 14 new BSIs. The evening closed with the reading of Vincent Starrett's "221B."

Although the crowd may have been smaller than in prior years, the conversation did not lag. After ordering fish, I had to follow Holmes's advice and turned down the first two plates delivered to me as they were beef and vegetarian, accepting only the third. As the evening progressed, I sensed that our table was moving. Confirmation from others at the table convinced me that it was not just the wine I drank that caused the movement. While others held the table up, I reached under it to adjust the legs so that I would not receive a lap full of food and drink.

Conversation and celebration continued after the coffee and dessert. Others with more stamina than I possess reported celebrations at a series of venues going on into the following day. 🐾

Conanical Cousin Romances

BY RUTH BERMAN

In the December Norwegian Explorer study group's discussion of BERY, it was pointed out that the failed romance between cousins Arthur and Mary Holder feels a little odd nowadays, when we worry about bad genetic consequences from unions of first cousins, whereas Doyle had no thought for such a problem.

I remarked then that Leslie Klinger had a footnote on the subject in his *New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, pointing to Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert as a famous example of nineteenth-century first cousin marriages. Someone objected that they were not first cousins, but more distantly related. A quick check of Wikipedia entries shows that they were indeed first cousins. Victoria's mother was Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, the daughter of Franz Frederick Anton (Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld) and the sister of Ernest (Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha), whose younger son Albert was thus the nephew of Princess Victoria and first cousin of Queen Victoria. The idea that the relationship was more distant may have come about from assuming that the change in title (reflecting a change in the territories allied under the ducal rule) between Franz Frederick Anton and Ernest implied a change in the direct line of succession. (In a patriotic nod to

Victoria's relatives, Jabez Wilson's pawnbroking shop in REDH was located in Saxe-Coburg Square.)

The modern fear of first-cousin marriages is an over-reaction to the actual genetic dangers involved. It takes a good deal of in-breeding to fix a bad (or, for that matter, a good) genetic trait in a group, in most cases, and a few marriages between first cousins don't really carry dangers worth worrying about. The exception, of course, is for genetic problems as obvious and as easily inherited as haemophilia or sickle-cell anemia. But in such cases, the family history almost inevitably shows earlier examples of the illness, and if the family history does not show earlier examples, first cousins are still reasonably safe to marry.

At first sight, Victoria and Albert might look like a prime example of the dangers of first-cousin marriages: their youngest son, Prince Leopold, had haemophilia; and through their daughters Princess Alice, the wife of Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse and by Rhine, and Princess Beatrice, the wife of Prince Henry of Battenberg, and through Leopold's daughter, another Princess Alice, the wife of the Earl of Athlone, haemophilia was carried into many of the royal and aristocratic houses of Europe. Most famously, Grand-Duchess Alice's daughter, Princess Alix of Hesse and by Rhine, became Empress Alexandra Feodorovna as the wife of Czar Nicholas II, and their son, the Tsarevitch Alexei, had haemophilia. If he had managed to live long enough, he might have inherited the throne and perhaps had daughters who would have carried the illness, or, if he had married one of his cousins carrying the defective gene, might even have fathered haemophiliac sons or daughters. But the Russian revolution accomplished what haemophilia did not, and Alexei was murdered July 17, 1918, a month short of his fourteenth birthday. The cousinship of Victoria and Albert, however, does not seem to have been a factor in the appearance of haemophilia in their descendants. There was no history of haemophilia in their well-documented family tree, and the probability seems to be that it began as a spontaneous mutation in Victoria, not an inheritance from the Saxe-Coburgs. (This account is based on the Wikipedia article, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haemophilia_in_European_royalty>.)

Arthur and Mary Holder are the only cousins potentially in love in the Sherlock Holmes stories, but Doyle had some cousin-couples in his other

work. Whether their romances led to happy marriages or not, genetic factors did not play a role in these stories. Doyle was evidently using the cousinships as a simple way to get the characters acquainted. In two of the stories that turn up using "cousin" as a search term on the "Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia" website <https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/Sir_Arthur_Conan_Doyle:Complete_Works>, which provides the texts of almost all of Doyle's works, the cousin romances led to true love and happy marriage. In *The Firm of Girdlestone* (in *The People*, October 27, 1889–April 13, 1890, book publication 1890), the greedy Girdlestons tried to get heiress Kate Harston to marry the junior Girdlestone. Luckily for her, she fell in love with her cousin Tom Dimsdale. (He was actually her second cousin, but she called his father "Uncle George" and evidently felt that the families were correspondingly close.) The Girdlestons tried to break them up by claiming that Tom was unfaithful to Kate and in love with his first cousin Mary Ossary, but the ruse was unsuccessful. In *The Refugees* (*Harper's Monthly Magazine*, January–June 1893, book publication also 1893), Amory de Catinat and his first cousin Adèle Catinat (her father had dropped the aristocratic "de" when he went into trade) were in love. As a Huguenot family in the time of Louis XIV (Doyle fudged the dates to get Louis's Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, forcing conversion to Catholicism on his Huguenot subject in 1685 to follow immediately upon his marriage to Mme. de Maintenon in late 1683 or early 1684 — and mentions Louis's age as 46 at the start of the story, which should be 1689 or 1690), they chose to escape to Canada, where the new laws pursued them, and then to New England, to find freedom and happiness. (For a Minnesota reader, it is fun to find *Sieur Du Lhut* — the eponym of Duluth — among the characters they meet.)

Contrariwise, in four of the stories, the cousins do not wind up together. In "Our Derby Sweepstakes" (*London Society Magazine*, May 1882, included *My Friend the Murderer and Other Mysteries and Adventures* 1893 (US)), Nelly Montague is torn between her cousin, medical student Solomon Barker, and a friend-since-childhood, Lt. Jack Hawthorne. The two suitors decide to let her be until after the race and then have the one with the losing horse step aside in favor of the other. While they are letting her alone, a third suitor wins

her love. Cousin and friend both lose both the race and the girl.

In *The Great Shadow* (syndicated to various newspapers October–November 1892, book publication 1893), set on the English/Scottish border during the Napoleonic wars, sheep-farming Jack Calder loves his faithless cousin Edie Calder, but she prefers his friend, medical student Jim Horscroft, until eloping with a dashing French spy. Jack and Jim enlist, and in the fighting at Waterloo they kill Edie's husband. Undaunted, she runs off with a French count — but dies in childbirth.

In *Uncle Bernac* (1897) the greedy uncle, having usurped his brother-in-law's estate during the French Revolution, tries to get his nephew Louis de Laval to fall in love with his daughter Sibylle, so that even if de Laval succeeds in getting his father's estate back, it will in the end still be the property of Bernac's line. The scheme fails, because both cousins are already in love with others, Louis with the English girl he eventually marries, and Sibylle with a young man who turns out to be a coward, ready to reject her to save his life.

The story has an extra attraction in the presence of Brigadier Gerard, here a young officer, a Lieutenant, not yet a Brigadier. Louis's narrative tells us that Sibylle eventually married Gerard. Doyle never got around to telling us this sequel. His final story about Etienne Gerard, although titled "The Marriage of the Brigadier" (*Strand Magazine*, September 1910, included in Doyle's 1911 collection, *The Last Galley*), is set in the Brigadier's youth, while he is still a Lieutenant (and before he has met Sibylle, one hopes). "Marie, the bride of my youth... kept for so short a time," apparently died soon after the titular marriage (in childbirth?).

(I can't help thinking that the level of gallantry Sibylle — and Doyle! — expect of her first sweetheart is unwise, however chivalrous. The pair are lost to each other either way, but if he's still alive he might be able to ditch the unwanted bride someday, perhaps by somehow managing to get an annulment and so return to his True Love eventually, something the dead cannot do. On

the other hand, submitting to tyranny tends to encourage still more tyranny, so there's something to be said for Sibylle's rejection of the coward. Sibylle is of the faction that believes Napoleon to be a tyrant who must be overthrown, whereas Gerard is devoted to the Emperor, so any later romance and marriage between them evidently would have to come a long time later, after Napoleon's actual overthrow at Waterloo has made their differing political opinions moot.)

In "The Confession" (*The Star*, January 17, 1898, and no book publication listed), an elderly nun making confession discovers that the priest hearing her is her lost love, who (she thought)

(Continued on page 14)

Baker Street West

BY PHILLIP BERGEM



As the Explorers have come to do, we held a gathering in late January, the 30th, to be specific, to meet after the holidays and hear from members who attended the Sherlockian festivities in New York. It was held, once again because of convenience, and good food and service, at The Local in St. Louis Park. There were 24 people there, and the room buzzed with convivial conversation. The organizer was Lindsay Hall, and after folks had obtained drinks and ordered food, she called on the various members to speak of their experiences. As noted elsewhere, there was a large group who traveled to New York this year. All of them were at The Local and spoke to the group. As is usual, the evening of shared fellowship was very fun and it was a nice opportunity to reflect and meet with friends. 🐾



Study Group Discussion: "The Blanched Soldier"

BY KAREN MURDOCK



he Discussion Group met on February 19th using Zoom. Steve Schier led the discussion on "The Blanched Soldier." Because the meeting was without geographical limits, many non-Explorers were present. The 24 participants included people in California, Canada, Czechia, Florida, France, New Jersey, New York, and Vermont.

Karen Ellery announced that this is the first anniversary of The Mincing Lane Tea Brokers, a Sherlockian scion for tea devotees which she helped to found. The group has a presence on social media and meets on Zoom four times a year.

Steve S. showed off his game of "Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective" and his CD of Fire-sign Theatre of San Francisco doing a comedic interpretation of "The Giant Rat of Sumatra." (This show is also available on YouTube.)

"The Blanched Soldier" was one of the last of the Sherlock Holmes stories, published in 1926 (Doyle died in 1930). It was the first story written by Sherlock Holmes (not counting GLOR and MUSG, which were mostly told by Holmes). In this story Holmes gives a summary of his methods as "systematized common sense."

An influence on this story might have been a short story entitled "A Slice of Life" by P. G. Wodehouse, published in 1926. This involved a young woman locked up in a country house because of a skin condition from which she suffered.

Karen E. noted that Holmes himself says he is an inferior writer to Watson.

Ruth Berman said the whole confrontation between Dodd and the Emsworths could have been avoided if Mrs. Emsworth had given Dodd the telephone number of Godfrey and let the two pals chat on the phone.

Steve S. said that ichthyosis is often hereditary, which leaves Sir James Saunders's diagnosis open to question.

Steve Miller said that the beginning of the story was nicely done (with Holmes wowing Dodd

with his deductions) but "The Big Reveal" was a letdown. Leprosy was an ancient disease. Many people in the Old Testament were struck with leprosy and it was seen as a punishment for sin. Steve felt that Colonel and Mrs. Emsworth should have gotten a second opinion on their son's disease.

Steve S. said one of the positive attributes of the story is when Holmes shows his thought processes. He tells the three possible solutions he came up with for the mystery and why he chose the third one.

Sandy Kozinn said she thought Mr. Kent was not much of a doctor. He came up with an incorrect diagnosis of the disease, and he spent most of his time with his patient just reading a newspaper.

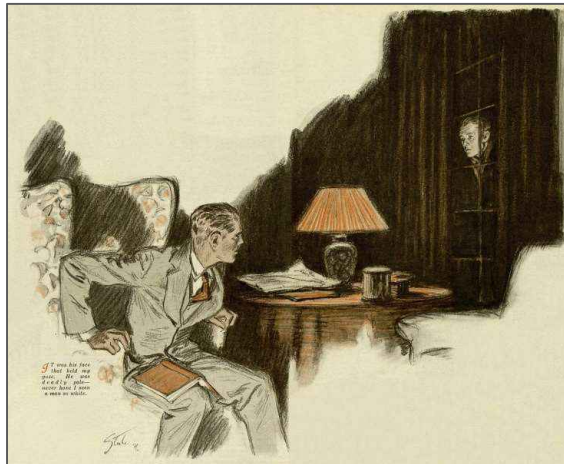
Shana Carter said Godfrey Emsworth portrayed the South African lepers as "monsters." But she praised the "great Gothic atmosphere" of the story and said it reminded her of *Jane Eyre*, in which a crazy woman was locked up in the attic.

Sonia Yazmadjian said Sherlock Holmes was "a bit of a ham." He does not want to reveal his methods because he likes to surprise his audience at the end of a story.

Steve S. said that in the 19th and early 20th centuries leprosy was "communicable and incurable" so it was much scarier when this story was written than it is today.

Peter German said that even in his youth some people were known to have "shuts-ins" kept in their homes. People took care of these incurables or those suffering from mental health ailments. Second opinions from medical practitioners are much more common now than they were 100 years ago.

Karen E. asked if doctors in 1926 were required to report outbreaks of diseases. Dick Sveum (who is



a doctor) said that he did not think Saunders would be able to make a correct diagnosis by just examining Godfrey for a few minutes. A good diagnosis would require blood tests and other tests that would take some time.

Karen Murdock said that a diagnosis of leprosy would involve more than simply a social stigma. If news of Godfrey's disease got out, it would bring "interference by the authorities"

(Doubleday, page 1011) and the government could remove Godfrey from his home.

David Hitchcock said that Colonel Emsworth is a red herring in the story. Dodd thinks Godfrey's inheritance is at the heart of the dispute between father and son. In the end, this is a non-issue. David said he liked the "supernatural element" of the story, in which a person is transformed into a ghost.

Lora Oberle asked if Godfrey would have been transported to a leper colony overseas. Nobody had an answer to this question, but there were domestic leper colonies in England. Karen E. said one such leper colony was founded as late as 1914.

Steve S. asked why Holmes wrote up this particular story and not more interesting-sounding ones like *The Giant Rat of Sumatra*. Karen E. said this was a tour de force of pure ratiocination in which Holmes solved the case before he even left his house.

Bob Brusica said there were plenty of other diseases Holmes could have made the center of a story — so why did he choose leprosy? Karen M. said it was probably because leprosy was a *foreign* disease and therefore especially scary. Bad things come from overseas in the Sherlockian Canon. This includes bad people who bring their foreign quarrels to the shores of Great Britain. Diane Madsen pointed out that the other story written by Holmes, "The Lion's Mane," also involved a dangerous foreign character (a jellyfish that washes up on the south coast of England). 🐙

Book Review: Sherlock Holmes and the Silent Contest

BY MICHAEL V. ECKMAN



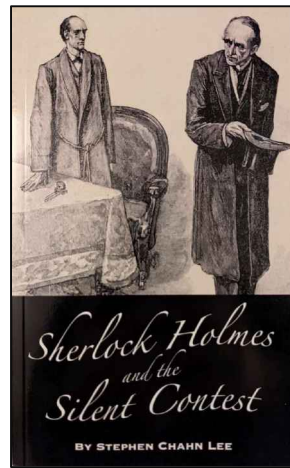
ne of the free items in the 2022 BSI Weekend Merchants' Room, was a short book, *Sherlock Holmes and the Silent Contest*, by Stephen Chahn Lee. Lee argues that in relating the Holmes stories Watson lied in order to aid Holmes in gathering evidence against Moriarty. This battle against Moriarty is the "Silent Contest" of the title. The subtitle of the book is more direct in stating "How Sherlock Holmes Defeated Professor Moriarty and Why Dr. Watson Lied."

Lee is a lawyer and former prosecutor. He also has experience as a newspaper reporter. Early on, Lee states that, after reading the book, "I think

you'll agree with me that Holmes and Watson were even smarter and cleverer than you thought."

Lee writes about why lies are told and the different levels of legal liability with respect to lies. He warns us that what a first-person narrator tells us should be carefully reviewed. Lee notes four levels of information: what actually happened, what the narrator experience and observed, what the narrator remembers, and what the narrator chooses to tell us.

In short, Watson tailored his narratives to lull Moriarty, Holmes's real target throughout the stories, into thinking Holmes had flaws and was not to be feared. In particular, Watson deprecated Holmes's knowledge of the solar system, of which



Moriarty would have been very savvy. Holmes used the time that Watson's narratives bought him to gather evidence against Moriarty so that a successful prosecution could be made.

Lee has a new and interesting take on FINA and the death of Moriarty. At the end of the book, Lee considers various candidates for the identity of Porlock, ending with a very surprising choice that, nevertheless, fits the spirit of the book. Whether Lee convinces the reader that Holmes and Watson were smarter and cleverer than originally thought, will be up to each reader to determine. Of course, a factor will be just how smart and clever do each of us consider Holmes and Watson to be before we read Lee's book. Regardless of the success of his argument, Lee's book is a pleasure to read. 🐙

A Scandal in Austin

BY RAY RIETHMEIER



mong my various interests (beyond the obvious Sherlock Holmes fascination) is a nearly lifelong appreciation for Old-Time Radio, which was a hobby my father shared with me. So I am a sucker for Sherlockian radio broadcasts, and when my internet wanderings brought to my attention "A Sherlock Holmes Radio Mystery Show" being performed on February 4 in nearby Austin, MN, I was in without any hesitation. For some time my wife and I had

been talking about making a short excursion to Austin to visit the SPAM museum anyway, so this became the impetus to make that road-trip finally happen.

Performed at the Hormel Historic Home by the Matchbox Children's Theatre, the radio play was an original adaptation of "A Scandal in Bohemia"



*Geoff Smith and Ray Riethmeier.
Photo by Becky Riethmeier.*

by Jon Jory, who added an intriguing prelude to the story we all know well. In this version, Sherlock Holmes (performed by Geoff Smith) and Irene Adler (Emily McAlister) already knew one another, and it seems that Holmes was somewhat smitten by the adventuress from the start. The story begins with their encounter at a social gathering, where they share a dance together! The tale is narrated by a bemused Watson (Lucas Johnson), who rather fills the comedic bumbler role we so often see in the doctor. The rest of the story is told in much the same way that we know it, but in this case Irene's besting of Holmes in the end has an additional bite to it, in that we find her living up to her maiden name. Rather than being the source of Holmes's appreciation for *The Woman*, her triumph instead seems to be a knife-twist for our hero. Coming from his one equal whom he so admires, his come-uppance seems to leave him... addled. Addled by an Adler, as her name should have forewarned him.

It was a fun evening filled with amusing interstitial advertisements for local businesses in the style of our favorite old-time radio commercials (read by the announcer, Katie Hunerdosse). Other cast members included Kim Zerke as Mrs. Hudson, Jake Gustine as the King of Bohemia, and Emma Brekke as a maid, with Dick McIntosh

serving as Foley artist. The production was directed by Angela Donovan. Coupled with our visit to the nearby SPAM museum, the performance made it a memorable outing for us, and I am glad to have been able to represent our Norwegian Explorers in the audience. 🐾

Early Sherlockian Studies – Pushing Back the Starting Time

BY PHILLIP BERGEM



There is much consideration of the early Writings on the Writings, such as identifying the first person to Play the Game by considering the tales of Holmes and Watson to be factual and discussing them in that sense. (Of course, what other way would they be treated?) It is acknowledged that Monsignor Ronald Knox's essay, "Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes" — first presented in lecture form in March 1911 and printed in Oxford's *The Blue Book* in 1912 — was a cornerstone for those who followed. But what preceded that cornerstone? There have been articles found earlier than 1911 that treat the subject, and Vincent Wright has found one that pushes the time back even farther.

Vincent Wright, a Sherlockian from Indianapolis, IN, wrote on his blogpost <<https://historicalsherlock.blogspot.com/2022/01/welcome-to-100th-blog-post-here-its.html>> on January 9th, about an article he found in *The Cornhill Magazine*. The article, "The Life of Sherlock Holmes," is reproduced on his blog page, is signed "H.E.W." and appears in the October 1898 issue. He adds to it, with the help of Les Klinger, by providing us with the name and details of the author. She was Helen Elizabeth Wilson of Bath, New York. Sadly, Ms. Wilson died at a young age in 1902 of typhoid fever. I encourage anyone interested in the Early Writings or Sherlockian Chronology who hasn't already done so to seek out Vince's blog and read Ms. Wilson's article. 🐾

(FOSH Annual Meeting – continued from page 1)

for his memorial article about Jon Lellenberg (September 2021).

If you would like to learn more about the Sherlock Holmes Collections, visit <<https://www>

lib.umn.edu/collections/special/holmes>. (Or Google: Sherlock Holmes Collections Minnesota.) If you wish to join and support the Collections, details can be found on the webpage under “Give to the Collection.” With donations over \$30 per year you will receive the newsletter, which is mailed out four times per year. Past issues of the newsletter are found in the same location. 🐾

(Cousin Romances – continued from page 10)

had rejected her in their youth. Actually, he was directed to the wrong window to look for her, by her jealous cousin, and the seeming betrayal when neither finds the other where expected for their elopement was the cause of their decisions to take their vows.

These cousin romances are all enjoyable to read — and interesting as showing Doyle engaging several times over with the question of whether cousinly romances can work. In these stories it is the psychological factors that drew him — whether the familiarity between the cousins makes it easier for them to love or harder because a stranger comes with more glamor — rather than any genetic factors. 🐾

Parting Words and Trifles

The Twin Cities independent bookstore One Upon A Crime, in addition to having an astounding selection of books, frequently hosts book signings. On **April 2nd** (2:00–4:00 P.M.) there is one for *Sherlock Cat and the Missing Mousie* written by Heather Edwards and illustrated by fellow Explorer, Amanda Downs.

- Local author Larry Millett has been bringing us wonderful tales of Sherlock Holmes in Minnesota since 1996. He will soon release his ninth volume in the series, *Rafferty’s Last Case*. Once Upon A Crime will also host him for a book signing on **April 23rd** (noon–2:00 P.M.).

- Explorer Melissa Aho has a chapter in *Holmes and Me: Reflections on the World’s Greatest Consulting Detective*, edited by Steve Mason and published by The Crew and Passengers of The Barque Lone Star. You can download a free pdf copy of the book at their webpage <www.dfw-sherlock.org/>. (Click on “Barque Society Pastiches” in the side menu.)

- On the subject of The Crew of The Barque Lone Star, Tim Johnson gave a well-received presentation at their virtual meeting held on March 6th. He spoke about the University of Minnesota and the importance of preserving collections (a subject related to his essay in the following note).

- The Finest Assorted Collection: Essays on Collecting Sherlock Holmes* was recently released and is edited by Peter Eckrich and Rob Nunn. (Explorers should recognize Rob as the guest speaker for our virtual 2020 Annual Dinner.) Fellow Explorers Monica Schmidt, Amanda Downs, and Tim Johnson have delightful essays in the collection. In all, there are 27 essays by wonderful Sherlockians. The final essay is by Barbara Shaw, step-daughter of John Bennett Shaw, who lives in Minneapolis. She spoke about John’s collecting obsession at our 2019 Conference (“Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences”), and this is a printing of that presentation.

- Upcoming events in the Sherlockian world include:

- The BSI will host a conference “Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire” at Bear Mountain Inn, near West Point, NY — July 30–31, 2022. <<https://bakerstreetirregulars.com>> and click on “BSI Events.”

- The famous Bouchercon is coming to the Twin Cities September 8–11, 2022.

<<https://www.bouchercon2022.com>>

- The Bootmakers of Toronto and The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection are hosting their “Jubilee @ 221B” conference — September 23–25, 2022. 🐾

<<http://www.acdfriends.org/events.html>>

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