

Special points of interest:

- Starrett collects some essays
- Spade, Chandler, Holmes?
- Those wily women
- Lighten up, Sherlock
- Moriarty's side of the story

**Some Thoughts Regarding
The Three Garridebs (3GAR)**

Lured Away

Nathan Garrideb joins Jabez Wilson (*The Red Headed League*) and Pycroft Hall (*The Stockbroker's Clerk*) as Holmes clients who are lured away from their normal haunts so that a criminal can put his plans to work. Similar to John Clay's case with Jabez Wilson, the villain needs access to Garrideb's place for nefarious purposes. Garrideb can perhaps be excused, as he is a rather secluded old man and likely more susceptible to fraud. Also, Holmes seemed to assure him that things were on the up and up when he agreed that Garrideb should travel, alone, to Birmingham. How could the man know that Holmes was arranging a stake-out?

One does have to wonder, however, about the \$5 million that Killer Evans was going to give to Nathan Garrideb in exchange for the man's one-third share of the Kansas estate. If this had been a legitimate deal, was Evans going to convert his one-third share to cash and exchange it for Garrideb's one-third ownership share? Would Evans have viewed this deal as the price for getting Garrideb's participation? It's not like Evans had a

spare \$5 million on hand. Nathan Garrideb should have been a little more suspicious about this trade.

Slow on the Draw

Holmes and Watson have their guns drawn and aimed at Killer Evans as he sticks his head up through the entrance to the cellar. Howard Elcock did a nice job of illustrating this scene for *The Strand* and it is consistent with Watson's narrative.

So how in the heck did Evans manage to draw a gun (having to move his hands either into his coat or out of sight below the level of the floor to do so) and get off two shots, well-enough aimed to wound Watson, without Holmes or Watson managing to return fire? The two men seem inexcusably lax in this instance. Holmes also moved close enough to

strike Evans in the head with the butt of the detective's pistol. It is surprising that Evans didn't get off another shot at Holmes, this one at point blank range. With Holmes incapacitated, he could have taken what he came for and escaped. Why didn't Holmes shoot Evans after being fired upon?

A Lion in Winter?

Killer Evans' real name was James Winter. Could he have been the husband, or possibly brother, of that hellcat from *The Illustrious Client*, Kitty Winter?



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221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes (Otto Penzler's Sherlock Holmes Library)

The very first article in *Baker Street Essays* was a glowing review of [The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes](#), by Vincent Starrett.

It is one of (and in my opinion, the best of) the books in Otto Penzler's Sherlock Holmes Library, a reissue of nine previously hard to find classics from an earlier age of Sherlockiana,

This series included a second volume by Starrett, *221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes*, a collection was originally published in 1940. Unlike *Private Life*, which consisted entirely of original compositions, Starrett served as editor of this collection of Sherlockiana, contributing only one piece; a pastiche entitled *The Adventure of the Unique Hamlet*.

221B contains twelve essays, three pastiches and a crossword puzzle. It starts off with *The Field Bazaar*, a scene written by Doyle for the Edinburgh University newspaper. It consists of an episode in which Holmes seemingly reads Watson's mind, then explains how he did it. In those pre-internet days, it's highly unlikely this small piece of Holmes fiction was widely available.

Was Sherlock Holmes an American?, BSI founder Christopher Morley's heretical supposition that the world's first consulting detective was really born on the western side of the Atlantic ocean, follows.

R.K. Leavitt's *Nummi in Arca* looks at Holmes' fiscal situation over the years and is an interesting topic. Elmer Davis and Jane Nightwork each contribute articles about the role of matrimony

in Dr. Watson's life.

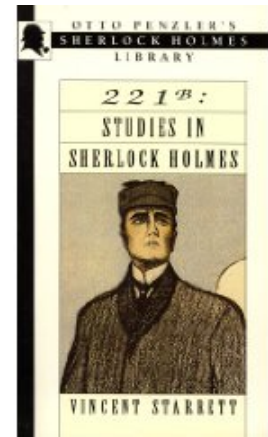
P.M. Stone relates a reporter's visit to an aging Holmes in *Sussex Interview*. I enjoyed this little piece quite a bit.

Starrett's *The Adventure of the Unique Hamlet* is frequently listed near the top of pastiche rankings, which I have never understood. Near the end of the story (which I don't wish to give away) Holmes explains to the villain how the trail he took between the two houses gave him away. Unless I'm missing something, this leaves a hole that you could drive a truck through and quashes the redeeming qualities of the tale. I can't imagine how this is considered one of the best non-Doyle Holmes adventures.

Sherlock Holmes in Pictures is a very nice reminiscence by the great Frederic Dorr Steele himself and worthy of inclusion in more collections. Dorr Steele comes across as very personable.

Edgar Smith's *Appointment in Baker Street* is an early dramatic personae from the Canon. Remember; this was long before Holmes encyclopedias by Orlando Park, Jack Tracy and Matthew Bunsen. At 101 pages, it is also far and away the longest piece of the book.

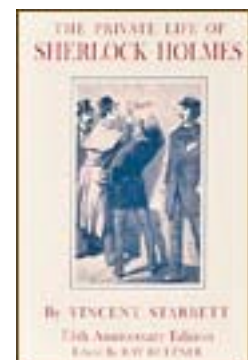
A few more pieces round out the collection. On the whole, there are some good reads in *221B: Studies in Sherlock*, but it is a mixed bag and not on the same level as Starrett's *Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. Of course, that's akin to saying Harrison Ford is no Humphrey Bogart in *Sabrina*. Who could be?



Speaking of...

Gasogene Books has brought us a 75th anniversary edition of *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. Gasogene, of course, is the publisher of Leslie Klinger's Sherlock Holmes Reference Library volumes. Naturally, this kind of high quality stuff is what you can naturally expect from good Midwestern folks.

This edition brings a new introduction and commentary on the book. A special treat is a video on the website that lets you hear Vincent Starrett himself recite his poem, 221B (with some nice video behind it). If you are any kind of Sherlockian (and you wouldn't be reading this e-newsletter if you weren't), click on [this link](#) and listen to a legend in the field.



Some Thoughts Regarding *The Missing Three Quarter (MISS)*

Holmes' Humor

The Missing Three-Quarter provides a wonderful look at Holmes' sense of humor. Godfrey Staunton is missing and his captain and teammate, Cyril Overton, has asked Holmes to find him. Staunton's uncle is Lord Mount-James, one of the richest men in England and a disagreeable old miser. Mount-James shows up at Staunton's hotel room as Holmes is going through the missing man's papers.

Mount-James asks who will pay for Holmes' expenses if his nephew is not found. When Overton suggests that his family (which is Mount-James) would, Mount-James explodes, as Watson reports:

"Nothing of the sort, sir!" screamed the little man. 'Don't look to me for a penny – not a penny! You understand that, Mr. Detective! I am all the family that this young man has got, and I tell you that I am not responsible. If he has any expectations, it is due to the fact that I have never wasted money, and I do not propose to begin to do so now.'"

When Holmes asks if Mount-James has any theory, the continually more disagreeable man finishes with "...and if he is so foolish as to lose himself I entirely refuse to accept the responsibility of hunting for him."

There is nothing to like about Mount-James. Sidney Paget certainly draws him as a particularly unattractive man, and Watson depicts him as one on the inside. Holmes decides to tweak the unpleasant man. Holmes tells

Mount-James that Staunton may have been kidnapped so that the villains could gain information that would allow them to rob the old man. Mount-James nearly goes into shock and compliments his nephew, urging Holmes to find him, even offering to pay as much as "a tenner" to help out.

Holmes doesn't really believe this to be true, but he said it to "interest that exceedingly unpleasant old person." Holmes is in rare form! He wanted to quiet down Mount-James and give him a poke in the ribs for his attitude regarding his missing nephew (who is also heir). Holmes is often arrogant and condescending (see about any story in the Canon), but this is a more enjoyable side of his personality.

Pompey

Pompey, apparently a beagle-foxhound mix, leads Holmes and Watson right to Staunton's cottage. This is an impressive feat for the "eminent specialist in the work" that Holmes set him to. Even the esteemed Toby did not have as successful a hunt as Pompey. But one has to wonder, where in the heck did this dog come from? Holmes, in

London, sent to an animal keeper for Toby in *The Sign of Four*. No stretch of imagination needed there.

In this instance, they are in a small, rural village. Since Pompey is part foxhound, it is possible that a hunting hound would be available for use. But it is surely convenient that Holmes finds a top quality tracking dog in the middle of nowhere, just when he needs one.

How Did They Keep it a Secret?

Dr. Armstrong tells Holmes that if Lord Mount-James discovered Godfrey Staunton's secret marriage, the old man would certainly cut his nephew out of his will. Of course, the marriage is now over with his wife's death, but what is the cover story going to be regarding Staunton's disappearance? Lord Mount-James doesn't seem to be the type to overlook Staunton's marriage just because his wife died.

Surely some plausible reason has to be found for the star three-quarter missing the big match. What will Overton tell his teammates and what will Holmes and Armstrong tell Mount-James? Since it's conceivable that Watson would be present with Holmes when Mount-James demanded to know what had happened (if for no other reason than to assure himself no gang of thieves was planning on robbing him), why didn't Watson comment on this final aspect of the case?



"Holmes is often arrogant and condescending (see about any story in the Canon), but this is a more enjoyable side of his personality."

Hard-Boiled Holmes

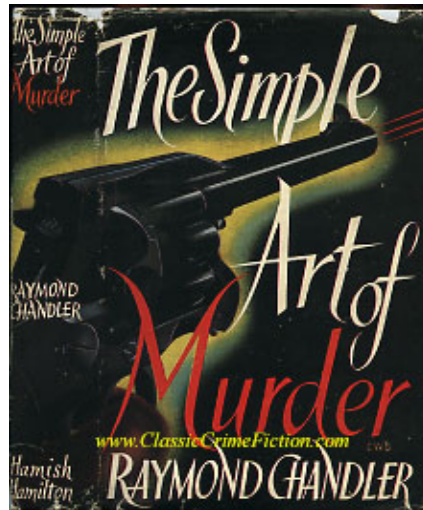
"But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid."

The Simple Art of Murder is an essay by Raymond Chandler, contained in the 1950 short story collection of the same title. The quote above can be found in that essay, which forever linked the term "mean streets" with the 'hard-boiled' genre.

One thinks of tough private eyes with guns, bottles and beautiful dames, of which Hugh B. Cave's Peter Kane is one of the most extreme examples. But was it really Chandler who created the phrase mean streets to describe the environment that his classic detective, Philip Marlowe, operated in? Is it possible that it was Victorian London that gave birth to the mean streets, which would later become famous as the settings in the pages of *Black Mask*, the American magazine that spawned the hard-boiled genre in the nineteen twenties? Could it be that Sam Spade and his hard-boiled brethren were really walking in the footsteps of the world's first private consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes? Why, it's elementary!

The era of British detective fiction between the two World Wars is known as the Golden Age. This was the time of the country cozy and the locked-room mystery. Closed environments and high society were staples of the style, exemplified by Agatha Christie and John Dickson Carr. Dorothy Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey typified the gentleman detective of the day.

But in nineteen twenties America, a counter to the Golden Age



developed. And detective fiction would be stood upon it's figurative head.

Carroll John Daly, Frederick Nebel and Raoul Whitfield were among those who wrote hard-boiled detective stories for *Black Mask* magazine. The two schools were reflections of the varying conditions in England and America. The quaint country manor, a characteristically British setting, had little relevance to a United States economically booming after World War I, yet entangled in Prohibition.

The rise of the American gangster and the big city lifestyle lent itself to tough-talking, fast-shooting detectives in the Roaring Twenties (as depicted in the film of the same name, starring James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart). The hard-boiled school was writing from the daily news. Dashiell Hammett, the first great hard-boiled author, said that all of his characters were based on real people he'd come across as a Pinkerton Agency operative (probably somewhat of an over-

statement). The hard boiled school of writing and the Golden Age detective mysteries were very, very different. But if we skip back one more generation to the era of Sherlock Holmes, we can see similarities to, and even influences upon, the hard-boiled writing style.

Little remembered Arthur Morrison created Martin Hewitt, the private detective who replaced Sherlock Holmes in the pages of *The Strand* after Doyle sent our hero over a cliff at the Reichenbach Falls.

Before that, in 1893, Morrison wrote a series of fourteen short stories that were published in *The National Observer* and released in book form as *Tales of Mean Streets*. They were the depressing stories of the desperate people in London's East End. These were the same streets that noted wilderness author Jack London would write about in *The People of the Abyss*. London went to the East End in the



If the style looks familiar, it's because *The Strand* used Sidney Paget to illustrate these stories of Holmes' successor.

Hard-Boiled Holmes cont.

summer of 1902 and lived amongst the poorest of English society. That's research!

The bleakness and utter despair of such an environment often resulted in crime and depravity. Dorset Street was considered to be the most crime-riddled street in the entire city. In 1888, an



estimated 1,500 people lived on the one hundred-and-fifty foot long street. It was said that the police were afraid to enter it after dark, and certainly did not go in alone. It's no wonder Jack the Ripper went hunting here. The seedy streets of Victorian London were a far cry from the halls and manors that Holmes often visited.

We know that Holmes frequently moved about the upper class, but he also often disguised himself as a workingman or some other commoner for an investigation. The Canon is replete with instances of Watson being fooled by one of Holmes' disguises. Even 'the Woman,' Irene Adler, was taken in not once, but twice, by Holmes' theatrical abilities during *A Scandal in Bohemia*, though he gave himself away the second time.

Holmes was far more than a problem-solver for the rich. He investigated many cases amongst the middle and lower classes. And some of those affairs took him to the rougher side of London. Watson finds Holmes undercover in an opium den early in *The Man With the Twisted Lip*.

Holmes certainly traversed those mean streets that Morrison had written of.

Naturally, Holmes ventured to country houses and rural villages to solve crimes. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Boscombe Valley Mystery*, *The Sussex Vampire* and *The Solitary Cyclist* are just a few examples. But he was very much an urban sleuth. And Holmes-era writers helped paint a picture of the more dangerous side of England's greatest city.

However, the mean streets of hard-boiled stories were more than just the physical environments that they served as in Holmes' time. Many of the authors were writing about the good and evil in mankind, not just the roads and towns that the detectives found themselves traversing. Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op books are very much about the fundamental issues of morality and humanity, and the streets that he traveled extended to the criminals he

pursued. The mean streets of *The Dain Curse* are more about the diabolical Owen Fitzstephan, confidant and villain in the story, than the thoroughfares of San Francisco.

In *The Norwood Builder*, a successful businessman may have killed a homeless man so that his body will be found in the remains of a building fire. It is not difficult to picture Ross MacDonald's Lew Archer encountering a similar situation as he investigates a southern California tycoon. The literal Victorian-era mean streets were redefined and reshaped for the new hard-boiled era. But the concept was present in Doyle's stories.

No one is going to confuse Victorian London with Hammett's Poisonville. But the back alleys and opium dens of Doyle's stories sometimes come to mind when reading Chester Himes' excellent tales set in Harlem. Raymond Chandler exhumed the phrase created by Arthur Morrison and transplanted it across one ocean and several decades. Doyle's mysteries were primarily about Holmes and the crime itself. The best hard-boiled mysteries had deeper themes in their plots. The mean streets of Morrison were not simply copied, they were evolved into something more.

Now, even a cursory glance shows us that the hard-boiled and Golden Age schools of mystery fiction were dissimilar. But were those characteristics that were so well developed by the American pulp writers of the twenties and thirties present a

James Coburn played a Hammett-like version of The Continental Op in a 1978 tv miniseries of *The Dain Curse*.

Hard-Boiled Holmes cont.

generation before in Doyle's stories of the great detective, Sherlock Holmes? Yes, to a degree, they were!

Agatha Christie's Miss Marple seemed to find more crime in the village of St. Mary Meade than existed in the entirety of London. It's hard to believe how much malice and mayhem there was in the place. It simply wasn't realistic. That element of realism, a key characteristic in the hard-boiled school, had more in common with Doyle's tales. Sure, there were the fantastic stories. Can you see a hard-boiled version of *The Devil's Foot*? Didn't think so. The 'wax figure of Holmes' ruse from *The Mazarin Stone* would not fly in a Paul Cain short story (Cain authored the classic hard-boiled



book, *The Fast One*). But several of the Holmes stories had elements that could be read in the day's headlines.

While a bit factually stilted, *The Valley of Fear* had a very real basis in the story of James McParland (Birdy Edwards) and Pennsylvania's Molly Maguires (The Scowrers). *The Five Orange Pips* incorporated the Ku Klux Klan. Anyone familiar with the case of Harvey Crippen, 'The Mild Mannered Murderer,' can see elements that appeared in Doyle's *The Retired Colourman*. Even Holmes' competition, the private detective only identified as "Barker," shadows Josiah Amberley in that story.

Hammett's Continental Op did a great deal of tailing suspects, just as the Pinkerton agent-turned-author did himself.

Another very important element of hard-boiled fiction was that of a "personal code of honor." Sam Spade sums it up at the end of *The Maltese Falcon* when he turns in Brigid O'Shaughnessy. Near the end of a speech where he explains why he can't let her go, he says "I won't because all of me wants to – wants to say to hell with the consequences and do it.." It is the perfect example of the knight-errant putting 'the code' before his own interests.

Conan Doyle was certainly a proper British gentleman whose patriotic loyalties we see reflected in Watson. The author instilled his sense of personal honor into Holmes. Quotes are sprinkled throughout the Canon that reflect Holmes' code of conscience over the dictates of law. A few examples:

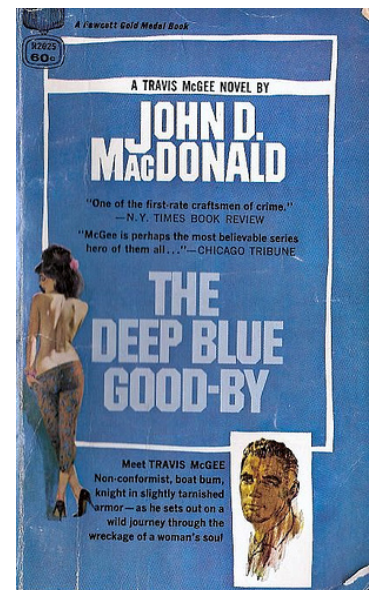
- I had rather play tricks with the law of England than with my own conscience (*The Abbey Grange*)
- I suppose that I am commuting a felony, but it is just possible that I am saving a soul (*The Blue Carbuncle*)
- I suppose I shall have to commute a felony as usual (*The Three Gables*)
- Legally, we are putting ourselves hopelessly in the wrong, but I think that it is worth it (*The Yellow Face*)

That first quote is a very representative look at Holmes' attitude towards his personal code.

In *Charles Augustus Milverton*, one could argue effectively that Holmes aided in (and most certainly covered up) the murder of 'the worst man in London.' He does not put the law, or even legal justice, before what he believes is right.

This code was not a mandatory element of hard-boiled writing. Several of Jim Thompson's books have been adapted to the silver screen, including *The Getaway*, *The Grifters* and *Pop. 1280*. His gritty looks at American life were not built around detectives, and it's often hard to find a code of honor when you can't even locate a sympathetic person in the cast of characters. And James M. Cain's *Double Indemnity* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice* are almost bereft of moral conviction. But the code was important to the hard-boiled detective.

John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee carried on this code in a series of successful novels spread over twenty years. MacDonald's favorite image of



Hard-Boiled Holmes cont.

McGee, an unofficial private eye, was as a weary knight riding a worn-out steed, jousting with a broken lance.

Travis McGee, perhaps more than any detective from the pulp era, personified the detective's personal code of honor. McGee differs from Holmes in this regard in that he was a much more humanized version of the character. But the elements of Holmes' sense of personal right and wrong carried through the entire hard-boiled genre and on to its private detective descendants. James Lee Burke's Dave Robicheaux teeters on the ledge of self-destruction in his conviction to follow his belief in right over wrong. But we can categorically say that the hard-boiled hero was a man of honor, just as Holmes was decades before.

Rex Stout created Nero Wolfe in 1934 and the last story was published in 1975, a month before the author's death. Fortunately, there were over fifty Wolfe tales in between. Stout created a synthesis of Holmes and the hard-boiled school that has yet to be surpassed.

Nero Wolfe was a brilliant, disagreeable and incurably lazy detective. He seems very much to be a successor to Mycroft Holmes, with a bit of Sherlock thrown in. His chronicler and assistant was the smooth talking tough guy, Archie Goodwin.

Goodwin himself stacks up with the best of the hard-boiled private eyes. To over-simplify, Stout paired Mycroft/Sherlock

Holmes with Sam Spade. Two characters, representing the Doylean and hard-boiled approaches, worked together in each story. This characteristic is probably one of the primary reasons that the Wolfe books have enjoyed so much success over three-quarters of a century.

A mention of S.S. Van Dine's (real name: Willard Huntington Wright) Philo Vance, a New York-based version of the gentleman detective, who starred in several novels in the twenties and thirties. For a time, he was as popular as any character in detective fiction.

Vance appeared in over a dozen movies, played by, among others, 'Thin Man' William Powell, 'Perry Mason' Warren Williams and Paul Lukas, whose performance in *Watch Over the Rhine* copped the Oscar that Humphrey Bogart deserved for *Casablanca*. Vance also starred in radio serials. But today, Vance is all but forgotten, while the hard-boiled genre is not only remembered but still influencing modern mystery fiction.

Black Mask was for the hard-boiled school what *The Strand* had been for Sherlock Holmes



and the British mystery school.



The mean streets of Holmes' London had counterparts in the urban and moral settings of Hammett, Chandler and David Goodis (author of *Shoot the Piano Player*, subject of an acclaimed film by Francois Truffaut). Doyle used real-world events in his plotting, the same way the American hard-boiled authors tore the headlines out of the daily papers and shaped them into action-packed tales.

Though not a direct model, Sherlock Holmes was a Victorian-era predecessor of Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe. Since we started with a quote from Chandler's essay, we'll finish with one as well: "...and Sherlock Holmes after all is mostly an attitude and a few dozen lines of unforgettable dialogue." It's a fitting epithet for Raymond Chandler's own hard-boiled detective.

A version of this article originally appeared in *Sherlock* magazine.

Nine years before donning the deerstalker, Basil Rathbone appeared as Philo Vance in *The Bishop Murder Case*.

Some Thoughts Regarding Thor Bridge (THOR)

Beaten Again?

In *Some Thoughts Regarding The Abbey Grange* (*Baker Street Essays*, Volume I, Issue I), I speculated that perhaps Holmes had been fooled by two lovers who conspired to murder a spouse. Is it possible that Holmes had a blind spot regarding this particular crime and he once again was duped by a pretty woman?

Neil Gibson admits that he no longer loves his wife, Maria. "My love faded," he says. He attempted to "kill her love," or to "turn it to hate." But Maria, terrible wife that she was, remained in love with the man whom she left her county and family for. She adored Gibson just as she had twenty years before when they met. He was hash, even brutal towards her, but she remained "as devoted as ever."

The stage is set for the third party to enter and complete the love triangle. Grace Dunbar answers an ad for a governess. She is by all accounts beautiful and Neil Gibson brings her aboard. Did Maria Gibson protest: Probably, but to no avail. A rival has moved in. There is no mention of a suitor for Dunbar, and we can speculate that a live-in governess is probably not a woman of means.

Gibson, who has been trying to drive off his wife and treats her cruelly, is instantly attracted to this attractive new woman in his life. She probably gets on well with the children, which might make her even more desirable.

Maria Gibson, now alone in a strange country, unloved by her

husband, watches this succubus now win over her children, day by day. Not knowing what to do, she simply watches the erosion of her life.

Meanwhile, Gibson secretly woos Grace Dunbar. His forceful personality and loads of money make him difficult to resist. Either willingly or grudgingly, Dunbar gives in to his attentions and becomes his mistress. Maria Gibson, like Sir Eustace Brackenstall in *The Abbey Grange*, is an impediment. Her condition, that of being alive, prevents two illicit lovers from the life they wish to lead together. Gibson already has riches; he just needs to get rid of his wife to live happily ever after with Grace Dunbar. Maria Gibson must die.

But how to achieve the desired end? Gibson's life is a story of success. He will dispose of his wife in a way that does not risk his future with Dunbar. The two lovers concoct a bold plan.

Neil Gibson makes it known to his wife that he has a meeting that evening. He is his usual rude self and tells her nothing more.

The next step is to leave a note, ostensibly to her husband, where Maria Gibson will find it. The note read "I will be at Thor Bridge at nine o'clock." You can bet that she will go there to confront her husband and this woman.

Gibson gives Dunbar one of a pair of pistols to hide in her room, which she does with no one noticing. Dunbar openly

goes to the meeting, making sure that she is seen on the way. Neil Gibson also makes his way to the bridge, though secretly. Maria Gibson is there, waiting when Dunbar arrives. She is surprised that her husband is absent, but she unleashes a blistering verbal assault upon the interloper to her household. Dunbar attempts to both stoke the fires of passion in her rival while also avoiding a physical confrontation.

Neil Gibson approaches from behind his wife, unnoticed as she unleashes her sound and fury. He reaches her unnoticed, though this is not vital. It does make things easier and he shoots her in the head. Gibson and Dunbar then stage events, disposing of the gun in exactly the fashion Holmes deduced. Maria Gibson is dead, the bridge is chipped and the gun is in the water. 'Wait a minute,' you ask. 'Surely the bridge was chipped by accident. That doesn't help the killers.'



Au contraire. The chip in the stone bridge is as vital to the plan as the note with Grace Dunbar's name on it. Gibson and Dunbar expected Maria

The suicide in *Thor Bridge* is a near copy of a real-life case included by Dr. Hans Gross in his masterpiece of criminal investigation, *Handbuch für Untersuchungsrichter*, from 1893. It is too much of a stretch of the imagination to think that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was not familiar with this incident.

Some Thoughts Regarding *Thor Bridge (THOR)* cont.

Gibson to bring the note with her to the bridge, expecting to be found on the body. Maria Gibson clutching it in her dead hand was a suitable substitute.

It is a disguised suicide. Gibson can't expect the local police to find the chip in the bridge. Grace Dunbar will be arrested. Sherlock Holmes is brought into the case to find evidence removing suspicion from Dunbar. Money is no object. Holmes, the pre-eminent consulting detective in the world will surely notice the chip. Assembling the pieces of the puzzle, he conducts the experiment described by Watson, resulting in discovery of the water-logged pistol and the release of Dunbar.

Neil Gibson and Grace Dunbar murder Gibson's wife, Maria. They make it appear as if Dunbar is guilty of the crime. Gibson then hires Sherlock Holmes, whose brilliance leads to the exact results the American millionaire sought. Poor Maria Gibson comes off looking like a sad, desperate woman. Whatever sympathy she might have expected is forfeited because she attempted to frame the 'innocent' Grace Dunbar.

After a suitable mourning period, Gibson weds Dunbar. The facts are still as Watson presented them, but in reality, Sherlock Holmes has been outwitted in this case.

Some Thoughts Regarding *The Three Gables (3GAB)*

Noble or Greedy?

Isadora Klein is not legally culpable for the death of Douglas Maberley, though she drove him to his ruin. Of course, she did admit to having him savagely beaten and to stealing his unpublished manuscript. However, apparently, from Holmes' vantage, there is very little he can do to make her pay for her misdeeds. So, he resorts to extortion.

Holmes demands 5,000 pounds from Klein. The money is to be given to Mrs. Maberley so that she can travel around the world. This is to recompense her somewhat for the injury done to her son.

Holmes does not charge anybody a fee for his services in this case. He did solve it, getting to the bottom of the mysterious doings at the Three Gables. Did Holmes perhaps "take a little something off the top" and convey less than 5,000 pounds to Mrs. Maberley? He's already admitted to compounding a felony in demanding the money from Isadora Klein, whom he clearly does not like. If he did give the full 5,000 pounds to Maberley, did he not also demand something extra from Klein for his trouble?



The Unidentified Inspector

Who is the clueless inspector who works this case with Holmes? He is not identified by name nor is he drawn by an illustrator. I find his attitude towards Holmes and the case reminiscent of Inspector Athelney Jones, last seen in *The Sign of Four*.

D. Martin Dakin, appalled by Holmes' attitude towards Steve Dixie, asserts that this story was not written by Dr. Watson. To his point we could add the unique element of the mystery inspector. Nowhere else in the Canon do we find an unnamed official taking the lead on a case investigated by Holmes.

Looking for other possible evidence that distinguish this case from others in the Canon, the detective also roughs up Mrs. Maberley's maid and makes fun of her, which seems out of the ordinary. And of course, he extorts money from Isadora Klein. Holmes seems a rather unpolished character in this story, not the world's foremost consulting detective.

Surely a Little Effort is Called For

Holmes identifies Douglas Maberley's luggage as the key to the case, yet does not look through it. He tells Mrs. Maberley to do so and goes home. This is laziness on Holmes' part that almost costs him the case.

Claudine Auger played Isadora Klein opposite Jeremy Brett in Granada's version of *The Three Gables*. The one-time Miss France had previously been a Bond girl (*Thunderball*)

Some Thoughts Regarding *The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax (LADY)*

Cut the Man a Break

In *John H Watson: The Crime Doctor*, (Baker Street Essays, Volume 1.2) I discuss Watson's efforts on Holmes' behalf in this case in detail. Here, I will only point out one aspect:

Early on, Holmes says "Watson, a very pretty hash of it you have made!" This is followed shortly thereafter by, "And a singularly consistent investigation you have made, my dear Watson. I cannot at the moment recall any possible blunder which you have omitted. The total effect of your proceedings has been to give the alarm everywhere and yet to discover nothing."

I can find no evidence of this unfair assault on Watson's efforts. The good doctor has picked up the trail of Lady Carfax, discovered the name of the couple she was last seen with and located her former maid. What "alarm" has he sounded everywhere? When Holmes and Watson finally confront the villainous Holy Peters, there is absolutely no sign that he had been forewarned that Sherlock Holmes was on his trail. In fact, had he known this, he would certainly not have sent Mary Fraser to the same pawnshop he himself had recently used.

In fact, if anyone tipped off Peters, it was Holmes himself! Holmes forces his way into Peter's residence and holds a gun on the man. But the detective cannot find Lady Carfax. He is removed from the premises by the police. Peters would have to be dead to not be alarmed now! He proceeds with his plans, which proves to be his undoing. Had he altered them, obviously

aware that Holmes is after him, he could quite possibly have succeeded in disposing of Lady Carfax, to her fatal detriment. For reasons I discuss in *John H Watson: The Crime Doctor*, Holmes has a predisposed view of Watson's efforts, even when his own performance is far less than stellar. This is quite evident in *The Disappearance of Lady Carfax*.

What's With the Disguise?

Why is Holmes disguised as a French workman when he comes to Watson's aid in the streets of Montpellier? There is absolutely no explanation for this. Was it required for his current efforts to find Lady Carfax? If so, he doesn't reveal the reason to Watson. Is he working on another case? The major chronologists do not think so. Perhaps Holmes simply didn't want to be bothered by the public or French police while he was there and felt the need to go incognito. Holmes has already received the French Order of the Legion of Honor and he may have believed that once the local police realized he was in town, he would be deluged with requests for assistance.

What Happened to Holy Peters?

Holmes barely manages to save Lady Carfax and Holy Peters and his partner, Mary Fraser, escape.

Surely Peters must go down as one of the most successful criminals in the Canon. The final words of the story are from Holmes: "If our ex-missionary friends escape the clutches of Lestrade, I shall expect to hear of some brilliant incidents in their future career."

Watson does not reveal whether or not the two are caught. He also does not mention them in any future chronicles, so it is quite possible that Holmes did not encounter Holy Peters again. Perhaps, fortunate with his narrow escape, Peters avoided any activity that would put Holmes on his trail again. Clearing out of London certainly seemed like a prudent move for the native Australian.



Some Thoughts Regarding The Mazarin Stone (MAZA)

The Play's the Thing

Jack Tracy's *The Published Apocrypha* contains the full text of the play *The Crown Diamond*, as well as an informative essay about it. *The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone* and *The Crown Diamond* are essentially the same story and share much of the same dialogue, differing only in a few details.

One of those details worth noting is that Colonel Sebastian Moran is the villain in play, whereas it is Count Negretto Sylvius in the story. Using Moran makes sense, since playgoers likely would know the character, based on his feature role in *The Empty House*. Both men like air guns and are big game hunters, so the real difference is negligible.

Watson as the Author

Theories abound as to who the real author of the story is, including Dr. Watson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Watson's wife (the former Mary Morstan), Billy the page and an unidentified person who wrote it up from Watson's notes.

I support the "Watson as author" theory, but for what I believe is an original reason. *The Crown Diamond* opened on May 2, 1921. Compared to William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band*, *The Crown Diamond* was not a very successful play portraying the great detective. And yet another element is the series of silent films starring Eille Norwood. The first fifteen Eille Norwood shorts, collectively known as *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes*, appeared in 1921

and were quite popular. *The Crown Diamond* was suffering in comparison.

Though credited to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Watson certainly had to have a significant role in the writing of *The Crown Diamond*. *The Strand* was preparing to publish *The Mazarin Stone* in October and the story was clearly derived from the play. In fact, it may well have been the earliest example of a novelization tie-in (the stage having since been supplanted as the source material by films and television for such "quickie" books).

For whatever reasons (quite possibly easy money: it has been known to happen), Watson was determined to go forward with his new Holmes story. But rather than have his name tied to a weak story, based on a less-than-wildly successful play, he quickly reworked his manuscript as a third person story. Now he would still be paid, but his name would not be identified as the author of this forgettable Sherlock Holmes adventure. This ploy apparently worked, as the debate over authorship still exists today.

A Lazy Tale

This story is quite possibly the weakest of all in the Canon. It has the feel of being rushed out to coincide with the performance of *The Crown Diamond*. Examples of the unusual details found and the lack of quality usually present in a Holmes adventure:

It is told in the third person, one of only two out of sixty not overtly narrated by Holmes or Watson;

It contains the only mention of a waiting room;

It contains the only mention of a secret exit from Holmes' bedroom;

It contains the only mention of an electric bell to summon someone;

The only thing preventing Holmes from having Count Negretto Sylvius arrested is the fact that the detective doesn't know where the Mazarin Stone is. So of course, the villain, knowing Holmes is in the next room, reveals his plans for the stone and takes it out of a secret pocket. Naturally, the hidden Holmes grabs it;

Holmes substituting himself for the dummy without the villains noticing stretches credulity;

Holmes tells Watson he may well be murdered by the Count. With the Count about to come into the room, Holmes tells Watson to go fetch the police. Watson hurries off without a protest, even though it is quite possible Sylvius will kill Holmes while the doctor is gone.

Holmes...Mycroft Holmes

With Jeremy Brett in poor health, Granada extensively reworked the story to feature Mycroft. Charles Gray, best-known as James Bond's nemesis, 'Blofeld,' carried the episode.



**Dennis Neilsen-Terry
starred as Holmes in
The Crown Diamond.
The play lasted only 28
performances.**

Reichenbach

From a Different Point of View

My name is Professor James Moriarty. I am, to be immodest, a particularly gifted individual in regards to the field of mathematics. My treatise upon the Binomial Theorem was well received in my younger days and *The Dynamics of an Asteroid* remains my finest work. I spent some time as Chair of Mathematics at a small university, but the life of a professor in a rural town was simply too dull for me, so I found employment as an Army Coach in London.

Ah, London, what a marvelous city! I could wax eloquently for hours about the emerald of Queen Victoria's great empire. But alas, it was in London that I encountered my greatest difficulties. For reasons that I will likely never understand, the great detective, Sherlock Holmes, convinced himself that I was a criminal mastermind! Can you imagine? I am a rail-thin math teacher and author.

Why, he told Inspector Mac-Donald of Scotland Yard that I had checking accounts in twenty different banks! I have saved a respectable amount, and I received a moderately generous bequest when my father died, but twenty checking accounts? Preposterous! I also understand that he told people that I had an original Greuze in my home. I happen to know which painting he is referring to, and it was painted by my younger brother, Colonel James Moriarty. How anyone could mistake that with a Greuze is beyond me.

Apparently, spurred on by Holmes' talk, the CID investigated me. They found nothing amiss, which should come as no

surprise. Of course, the man only persecuted me from afar. I know for a fact that he broke into my home at least twice, looking for heaven knows what. And once, I am sure that he took some papers related to a mathematical theorem I was working on. Did the egomaniac have the decency to return them, once he discovered that there was nothing sinister about them? Of course not. Two years of effort gone!

He harassed my professional associates and hounded my household staff. The man was attempting to frame me for high crimes! The entire situation was just absurd. I understand he did not even tell his colleague, Dr. Watson, about me. Mister Holmes clearly seemed to have some kind of persecution mania and was transferring it towards me.

Finally, the situation became intolerable. I was in danger of losing my current position due to his assaults upon my character. I resolved to visit him at his lodgings in Baker Street.

I had read all of the tales in *The Strand*, and I knew, disturbed as the man was, that he was a supremely intelligent individual. I have studied some minor matters of the brain, and I was surprised that his orbital development was a bit less than I expected and I told him the same. But then I had to exclaim in surprise:

"It is a dangerous habit to finger loaded firearms in the pocket of one's dressing gown. You could injure both of us!"

He seemed a bit chagrined and slowly extracted the gun, placing it on the table in front of him. I noticed that it was still pointed at me and he could fire it within a second.

"You evidently don't know me. I am Professor James Moriarty, a teacher of mathematics. There is no need for aiming a loaded gun at me, sir."

He moved not a facial muscle. "On the contrary, I think it is fairly evident that I do. Oh, I know you too well, Professor. I know that you were forced to give up your Chair; that you live far above your legitimate income and that you are the chief of a criminal organization, the likes of which England has never seen."

Oh bother, here we go again.

"Please sit, I can spare you a few minutes if you would like to speak."

I was there to tell him that if he did not stop harassing me, I would pursue the matter through the courts, and he was fully aware of this. "All that I have to say has already crossed your mind."

"Then possibly my answer has crossed yours," he replied.

I should have known that there would be no reasoning with this man. He was going to force my hand. Apparently the mania that he suffered from was driving his actions. "You stand fast?"



Reichenbach

From a Different Point of View cont.

“Absolutely.”

With a defeated sigh, I reached to my inside coat pocket and withdrew my pad, which I never went anywhere without. He panicked and picked up the revolver, pointing it at my forehead.

“Again, I insist that you put down the pistol before you injure someone. Really, man, you are trying my patience.” I looked at some dates scribbled in my book.

“You crossed my path on the 4th of January. To be more precise, you accosted me outside my club and threatened me.”

He merely looked on impassively.

“On the 23rd, you incommoded me. Really, Mister Holmes. I think it was totally unacceptable that you fed green hay to my carriage horse. I was late for my lecture, and my poor Mary was incapable of pulling her load for four days.”

He neither affirmed nor denied anything.

“By the middle of February I was seriously inconvenienced by you. To set off a smoking device, stand up in the back of my auditorium during class and yell ‘Fire’ is beyond all bounds, sir,” I said, warmly.

A faint smile played across his face. I was completely exasperated with this man.

“At the end of March, I was absolutely hampered in my plans. I could not take my scheduled trip to France because you arranged for the Crown Solicitor to audit my finances. Of course, they found nothing amiss, but my travel opportunity had passed.”

The smile grew slightly wider.

“And now, at the close of April, I find myself placed in such a position through your continual persecution that I am in positive danger of losing my liberty. I found the jewels that you planted in my study safe. You were obviously going to call the police and have them found in my possession.”

He finally spoke. “Three days, professor. You and your entire gang are to be rounded up in three more days.”

“Gang! What gang? What in the world is wrong with you? Did that seven per cent solution fry your rational processes? The situation is becoming an impossible one.”

“Have you any suggestion to make?” he asked me, as if he were looking for dining accommodations.

I had to clench and unclench my fists to retain my composure. “You must drop it, Mister Holmes. Really, you must.”

“After Monday,” he replied.

Oh, what a villain! I made one

final attempt to sway him with reason and flattery, rather than a threat.

“Tut, tut. I am quite sure that a man of your intelligence will see that there can be but one outcome to this affair. It is necessary that you should withdraw. You have worked things in such a fashion that we have only one resource left. It has been an intellectual treat to me to see the way in which you have grappled with this affair, and I say, unaffectedly, that it would be a grief to me to be forced to take any extreme measure. You smile, sir, but I assure you that it really would.” I shuddered inwardly at having to insincerely compliment this lunatic.

“Danger is a part of my trade,” he said with complete cool.

I was absolutely furious! This man’s paranoia was destroying a life that I had worked very hard to build. I will admit that I finally lost my temper. Readers of *The Strand* may recall Dr. Watson’s recounting of Holmes’ version of what I said next:

“This is not danger. It is inevitable destruction. You stand in the way of not merely an individual, but of a mighty organization, the full extent of which, you, with all your cleverness, have been unable to realize. You must stand clear, Mister Holmes, or be trodden under foot.”

Pure blather! I can’t really blame Dr. Watson, who always seemed a bit simpleminded to me, which would explain why he continued to follow Holmes around like a lap dog and put up with so many

**Moriarty is not a criminal
mastermind in Michael
Kurland's *The Infernal
Device, Death by
Gaslight, The Paradox
Paradox, The Great Game
and The Empress of India.***

Reichenbach

From a Different Point of View cont.

indignities, which he himself recorded. He was merely reporting back what Holmes told him.

What organization was he talking about? For heaven's sake, I was a math teacher! Other than my household staff, which depended upon my good standing for their wages, who in the world was he referring to? The man was clearly out of his mind.

What I actually said was: "Danger? What danger? The only danger here is that you will shortly find yourself in front of the magistrate for unlawful persecution. Do you have any understanding of what you are doing? If you do not cease bothering me immediately, I shall ruin you before the courts. None will come to you for your famous detecting skills."

Apparently he had become bored with the conversation. He stood and said in the most exasperatingly condescending manner, "I am afraid, that in the pleasure of this conversation I am neglecting business of importance which awaits me elsewhere."

I shook my head in sadness. I will not repeat verbatim Watson's report of what we said next. It is completely ridiculous. My saying that I wouldn't stand in the dock; Holmes talking about former eventualities and my saying he would get one, but not the other. It smacks of cheap stage dialogue! Of course, Watson was not much of a writer.

No, I shall tell you of that exchange. What I in fact said was,

"Mister Holmes, you have persecuted me long enough. I am not without influence. If you do not cease and desist as of this moment, I shall bring charges against you on Monday morning. I have documented your actions, and you shall suffer for them. I give you this last opportunity to act with some kind of propriety. I implore you to take advantage of it."

The man actually laughed at me and said that on Monday morning I would be taking my first step to the gallows! I gathered my hat and cane and arose. I could not believe that this man was England's finest detective. As I passed through the door, I heard him say "We are not through yet, as you shall soon know."

I took this to mean that he would continue hounding me. Oh, how I was mistaken. I understand from Dr. Watson's account that Holmes was nearly run down by a van shortly afterwards. That type of thing certainly never happens on the cobblestone streets of London! No, his nemesis must have been trying to kill him. Then, a brick fell from a building being repaired and nearly injured him. He summoned the police, who found nothing on the roof and determined that it must have been the wind. Oh no, Holmes knew better! Finally, he was attacked by a ruffian on the streets, but Holmes overcame him and the man was arrested.

I ask you, what man in all of England was most despised by the criminal element? Why, Sherlock Holmes. I am amazed that he was not set upon every

time he left Baker Street. Holmes had put more men in the dock than any other citizen of London. Yet, these mishaps were all caused by me, a criminal mastermind. Ridiculous!

The next morning, he set out with Watson on a trip to the Continent. Apparently, there had been a fire in his Baker Street flat the evening before. Based on Dr. Watson's accounts, I'm surprised that he hadn't already burned the place to the ground, between his outlandish experiments and careless smoking habits. But once again, it was the diabolical Professor Moriarty who was to blame.

Holmes was in disguise, while Watson was in his everyday traveling clothes. What kind of a muttonhead would I have to be to not recognize the good doctor? Some criminal mastermind I was supposed to be!

As he was running around the city dressed as an elderly Italian priest, I was in my study, preparing to work on a breakthrough regarding the binomial theorem. I had found a variation on my early work that promised to be revolutionary. I sensed that I was only a few days away from perfecting it, after over a year of labor. Imagine my horror when I opened my wall safe and my papers were gone! Instead, sitting where the bundle should have been, was Sherlock Holmes' Consulting Detective card. I screamed in rage, startling my housekeeper. Now he had gone too far. On the back of the card was written, simply, 'Paris.'

(Cont. on next page)

John Gardner's trilogy, *The Return of Moriarty*, *The Revenge of Moriarty* and *Moriarty*, feature a variant Moriarty as a Gaslight-Era godfather.

Some Thoughts Regarding The Veiled Lodger (VEIL)

Watson's Records

At the opening of *The Veiled Lodger*, Watson mentions the “long row of year-books which fill a shelf” and “the dispatch-case filled with documents.” These are treasure troves of Watson’s notes and summaries of Holmes’ cases. He then explains that someone is attempting to destroy these papers!

Watson states that he knows who is behind “these outrages” and if they continue, he will reveal “the whole story concerning the politician, the lighthouse and the trained cormorant.” Wow!!

I would mention that there is no guarantee that politician referenced in the untold case is the person behind the attempt to destroy Watson’s papers. This does not seem to be an unreasonable assumption, however, and would add another compelling element to the untold case.

Reichenbach...

cont.

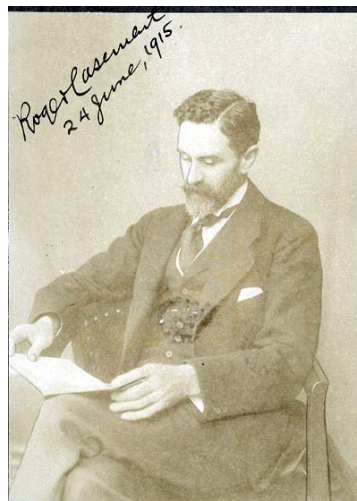
I could barely think straight. He had stolen my papers!

Oh, just recalling that moment absolutely infuriates me. I had never been so disturbed in my life. I find myself clenching my fists in rage even now. In fact, I think this is an expeditious moment to pause in my tale and return to my work. I shall complete my tale, including my amazing encounter with Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls, at another time.

The ‘Politician’

Sherlockians have speculated on the identity of the mysterious politician referenced in this case. *The Veiled Lodger* occurred in 1896 and was published in 1927. Presumably the events involving the politician, the lighthouse and the trained cormorant occurred closer to the latter date, rather than the former. Attempts to destroy the documents would likely not have waited over thirty years if they were that damaging.

Who could the politician be? How about Sir Roger Casement? Casement was a close friend of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and served for many years as the British Consul in Africa and South America.



Casement was openly critical of how native workers were treated in the Congo and his 1903 Report received international attention. As a result, Belgium improved conditions in the Congo in 1908. For his accomplishments, Casement was awarded a knighthood in 1911. He suffered from poor health and that same year he retired from public service and returned to Dublin, the city where he was born.

Casement became a strong supporter of the movement for Irish independence from England and he traveled to New York City, seeking aid for the Irish nationalist movement. World War I broke out and Casement traveled to Berlin in 1914, seeking German aid for Irish independence. Germany’s support was tepid, at best, and Casement became disappointed in the results of his efforts. He feared that an uprising planned in Ireland for Easter, 1916, was doomed to failure. A German submarine returned him to Ireland on April 12 of that year. Twelve days later, he was captured by the British and charged with treason.

The Black Diaries, allegedly written by Casement, surfaced after his arrest and certainly prejudiced his case. The diaries alleged that Casement had sex with young native boys during his diplomatic service.

Doyle argued that Casement’s homosexuality was caused by insanity and the man should be spared, but his efforts failed. Casement was found guilty of treason, stripped of his knighthood and hung on August 3, 1916.

His Last Bow revealed that Holmes was active in aiding the war effort for England. As the Irish-American agent Altamont, he was certainly capable of infiltrating the Irish Nationalist movement on behalf of the Foreign Office. Did Holmes’ actions result in Casement’s ultimate execution?

Casement was found guilty of treason, stripped of his knighthood and hung on August 3, 1916

Baker Street Essays

The Canon Examined



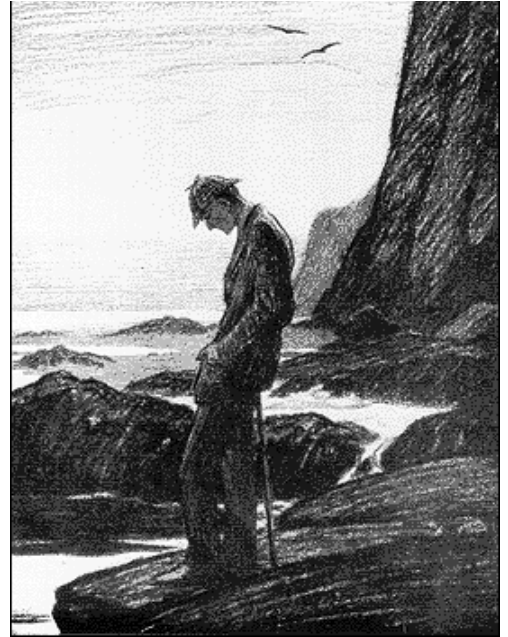
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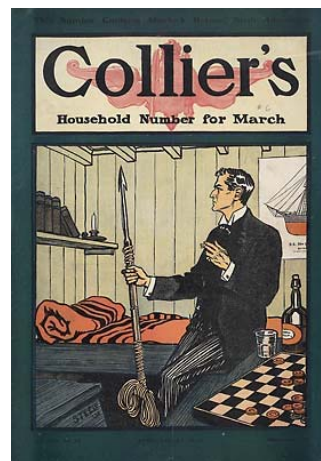


Illustrators of the Canon:

Frederic Dorr Steele

with color and detail.

Dorr Steele's black and white illustrations are much less exciting and, in general, inferior to Sidney Paget's work. One notable exception is the wistful picture above from *The Lion's Mane*. William Gillette was clearly a strong in-



On the strength of his marvelous cover illustrations for *Collier's*, Frederic Dorr Steele is the pre-eminent American Sherlockian artist. They are wonderful drawings alive

