



November 1, 2014 Holmes Beach, Florida

38th Annual Fall Gathering

The Pleasant Places of Florida



THE ADVENTURE OF THE DYING DETECTIVE

Special thanks to Claude Salomon for getting the ball rolling. Unfortunately, due to a weather calamity, Claude was unable to attend. See you next time, Claude!

Program

Welcome

"You won't take the key from me by force, Watson, I've got you, my friend. Here you are, and here you will stay until I will otherwise. But I'll humour you."

Toasts

"I never needed it more," said Holmes as he refreshed himself with a glass of claret.

The Musgrave Ritual

"You will help best by doing what you're told."

Repast

"I think that something nutritious at Simpson's would not be out of place."

Quizzes

"Now cast your mind back, Holmes."

Presentations

"Well, Watson, we seem to have fallen upon evil days."

Announcements

"Who is this person? What does he want?"

Farewells

"The cab had driven up, and I left him."

221B

"I listened earnestly to her story."



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The 38th Annual Spring Gathering of the Pleasant Places of Florida took place at the Island Gourmet Grill in Holmes Beach, Florida on November 1, 2014. In attendance were Mike & Tracie Bryan, Tod Butler, Jeff & Wanda Dow, Carl Heifetz, Trudee Kondos, Mark Levitt, Tom & Diane Gilbert Madsen, David & Connor McCallister, David Rogerson, George Steel, Art Walker & Gerry Hynes, and Lynn & Charles Wells.

"You will tell him exactly how you have left me," said he. "You will convey the very impression which is in your own mind - a dying man - a dying and delirious man. Indeed, I cannot think why the whole bed of the ocean is not one solid mass of oysters, so prolific the creatures seem. Ah, I am wandering! Strange how the brain controls the brain! What was I saying, Watson?"





CAPTIONS

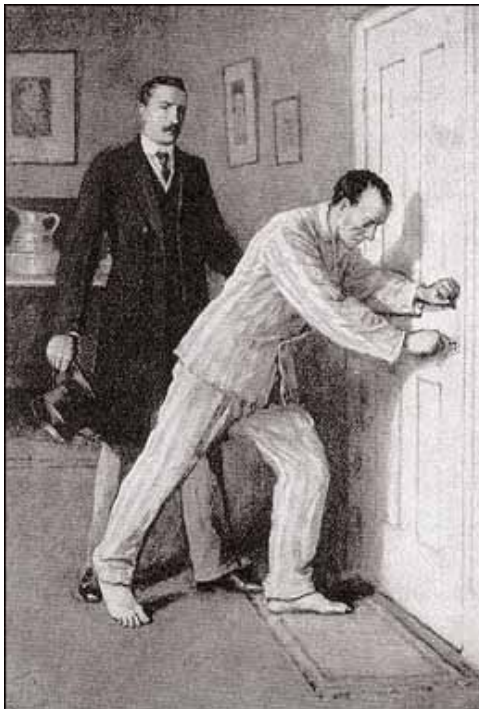


Tell Mrs. Huson she's fired.	Diane M.
I guess I picked the wrong week to kick cocaine.	Dave R.
Why didn't you warn me not to eat the whole box of chocolates?	Wanda
I wish I had a sleep number bed!	Lynn W.

No time to cuddle?	Dave R.
That's MY corncob! You can't have it!	Wanda D.
No, Watson! Those are MY Altoids!	Mike B.



Simon Says "Touch your nose!!"	Dave R.
Try to disguise yourself, but I recognize you Sgt. Schultz! Now tell me where Hogan is!	Wanda D.
Another remark about my cap and you'll find yourself in the street, sir!	Mike B.



Do you have a can of WD40?	Art W.
"Knock. Knock." "Who's there?" Repeat. "Knock. Knock."	David R.
I tell you I simply have nothing to wear. Here - look in my closet yourself!	Wanda D.

Rock.....Scissors....Paper	Dave R.
You put your right foot in, you put your right foot....No, you fool! Your OTHER right foot!	Wanda D.





Eighteen Sherlockians from west central Florida assembled in Holmes Beach Florida for the 38th Fall Gathering of the Pleasant Places of Florida on November 1, 2014. Holmes Beach was the original home of the Sherlockian Scion since its founding by five "pips" in 1972. The focus of Sherlockian discourse was *The Adventure of the Dying Detective*. The Gathering lasted from noon to roughly 3:30 P.M. at Island Gourmet and Grill. The event was arranged by Claude Salomon. However, she was unable to see the fruit of her labors due to the impact of terrible weather conditions on her home. We were all grateful for her efforts, and hope to see her when she is able to join us at the next event.

After introductions of the participants, the activities were led off with the customary responsive reading of *The Musgrave Ritual* by David McCallister. This was followed by a series of toasts:

A glass was raised to The Queen by David McCallister.
 Sherlock & Watson were toasted by Mark Levitt.
 Irene Adler was toasted by George Steel
 Diane Madsen toasted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.
 Lomax, the Sub Librarian was toasted by our own Librarian, Mike Bryan.
 The Founder, Leslie Marshall, was toasted by one of the founding members, Wanda Dow.
 The Recorder, Dr. Benton Wood, was toasted by David McCallister.

A Rap Toast to Mrs. Hudson

By Jeff Dow

Mrs. Hudson
 She is long-sufferin'
 She's a landlady
 Who don't like it shady.
 Got a plant named Sadie
 Cooks like Beef O'Brady's.
 Two-twenty-one-B. Two-twenty-one-A,
 You hear what I say.
 It's what she owns -
 She makes great scones.
 She's not defective,
 Don't need a detective
 Dyin', cryin', lyin', buyin'.
 Holmes is masterful, like the Baskervilles.
 His payment is handsome,
 Like Victoria's ransom,
 She could be dancing?
 'Stead of putting' up with the friction,
 Holmes' musical addiction,
 His chemical pollution,
 His seven-ercent solution.
 She may be long-suff'rin'

But she makes a mean muffin.
 She owns the whole block
 She owns a bunch of stock
 Don't need to change her lock.
 I give to you
 A woman who
 Makes great stew.
 Raise your glass
 To a woman with class.
 Mrs. Hudson.
 Huh!

A Poetic Toast to Sir Jasper Meek, Penrose Fisher and Dr. Ainstree

By Wanda Dow

Three names invoked by Watson
 Meek, Fisher or Ainstree
 Authorities all on tropical disease
 But that we shall never see
 Had Sherlock Holmes been as ill
 As Watson observed, so severely
 Perhaps a cure could have come
 From one of these named three

But Holmes would not let his friend
 Come close enough to see
 That he could not be cured
 By Meek or Fisher or Ainstree

The only cure it seems
 Was to capture Mr. Smith, comma, C.
 And have him pay for his crime
 A "Cultured" murder mystery.

To Jasper Meek, Penrose Fisher and Dr. Ainstree!

A Toast to Louis Pasteur

By Carl Heifetz

On December 27 we celebrate the birthday of Louis Pasteur who lived from 1822-1895. During those years he set the stage for many advances in the study of microbiology and infectious diseases.

How does this impact on the Canon? In the narratives that are the subject of these discussions are contained many reference to infectious diseases. Most noteworthy, which shall be our story to be studied on that date, is *The Adventure of the Dying Detective*. You will recall that in this case Holmes pretended to be dying from a rare tropical disease, possibly "the black formosa corruption" or "tapanuli fever." By virtue of Dr. Watson's intervention, Mr. Holmes is able to do a "gotcha" on Culverton Smith, a Sumatra planter and expert on this illness. Mr. Smith was the individual who thought that he had tricked Sherlock Holmes into contracting this dread and incurable illness by sending him a boxed booby-trapped injection device. According to Baring-Gould, Mr. Hugh LTang's researches have identified this disease as a condition known as tsutsugamushi fever or scrub typhus. Effec-



tive antibiotic therapies for this rickettsial infection has been available for roughly 50 years. Thus, this disease is not incurable today; however, in the golden era of the Victorian age it was associated with a high degree of morbidity and mortality.

No doubt, the life of The Literary Agent had a great impact on Mr. Holmes' and Dr. Watson's interest in this subject. First of all, Arthur Conan Doyle received his Doctorate of Medicine with a thesis concerning the bacterial infection syphilis. His wife "Touie" died of tuberculosis after a lingering illness. Further, in May, 1892, a letter from Dr. Joseph Bell suggested a story idea for a "bacteriological criminal." In addition, it has often been suggested that Dr. Watson's first(?) wife, Mary, also died of tuberculosis. This was a century of great advances in the knowledge of infectious disease and microbiology in general: Jacob Lister led the way to aseptic surgery; Pasteur developed vaccines for anthrax and rabies; Koch worked out the pathogenesis of tuberculosis; and a discussion between Mr. Sherlock Holmes and Professor Paul Ehrlich in Montpellier in 1894 led to the latter's discovery of arsphenamine, the first antibacterial drug.

Also, 1899 was the year that the American Society for Microbiology (once known as the Society of American Bacteriologists), the largest single biological society in the U.S., was founded.

The Canon abounds with bacteriological references. Dr. Watson had been afflicted with enteric fever during his recuperation from a gunshot wound in *A Study in Scarlet*. Jonathan Small had been "racked with ague" during his imprisonment in the Andaman convict Barracks in *The Sign of Four*.

In *The Stock Broker's Clerk*, Holmes deduced that Watson had been "unwell lately" with a summer cold. Consumption (tuberculosis) is mentioned in three accounts: *The Final Problem*, *The Adventure of the Missing Third Quarter*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Other infectious diseases in the Canon are as follows: diphtheria, *The "Gloria Scott"*; erysipelas, *The Adventure of the Illustrious Client*; suspected leprosy, *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier*; suspected spinal meningitis, *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire*; pneumonia, *The Adventure of the Three Gables*; rheumatic fever, *The Adventure of the Lion's Mane*; tetanus, *The Sign of Four*; and yellow fever, *The Yellow Face*.

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE BEFORE CULVERTON SMITH

by Wanda Dow

Culverton Smith specifically states "Among those gelatine cultivations some of the very worst offenders in the world are now doing time."

But why did he have them? Surely he did not study the cultivations to create cures, or Watson

would have heard of him. No, he was a collector of death. Biological warfare in the 1800s. New? Not really.

As far back as 600 BC, the Assyrians poisoned the wells of their enemies with rye ergot. I'm sure all the Assyrians knew was that the fungus that grew on rye caused sickness or death. We now know it produces a hallucinogen similar in chemistry to LSD. Lest you think it might be a good idea to produce your own high, ergot poisoning causes delusions, paranoia, twitches, seizures and cardiovascular problems that can lead to death. Those affected seemed to go mad, which added to the terror element.

In 590 BC, a purgative was used to poison the water in an aqueduct leading from the Pleistrus River. Sparta used toxic smoke by burning wood dipped in tar and sulfur. Moving up to 400 BC, Sythian warriors dipped their arrows in decomposing bodies or a mixture of blood and feces to insure that even a nick would fester with disease. In China, they used bellows to pump smoke from furnaces which burned balls of mustard and other toxic vegetables into tunnels to discourage enemies from digging. Later, the Romans catapulted bees and hornets nests. Hannibal won a naval victory by catapulting pottery jars with poisonous snakes onto the decks of his enemy's ships.

In the 110s to the 1600s, germs were yet to be understood, but they believed the foul smell of rotting bodies could spread disease and so would use human or animal corpses as weapons, contaminating wells, flinging putrefying carcasses into castles, catapulting corpses over walls.

During the 18th century, more was understood about disease. The problem with biological warfare as it had been used (flinging corpses), was that it was indiscriminate. However, if you could narrow down the exposure to the enemy, such as when the British purposefully gave blankets to the Indians from the small pox hospital, the resulting epidemic could be very successful.

By the 19th century, heavy artillery came into play and outweighed the use of bio warfare, although there were some reports of it during the civil war.

This brings us up the Culverton Smith. Speaking of the Civil War, I do have to mention that in 1863, the Union side officially banned this type of action. US Army General Order No. 100 stated: "The use of poison in any manner, be it to poison wells, or food, or arms, is wholly excluded from modern warfare."

So much for the civilized world.



Photos by Carl Heifetz



THE DYING DETECTIVE QUIZ - WATSON LEVEL

1. Who brought Watson into the adventure?
2. How long had Holmes been ill?
3. In what month did the adventure begin?
4. Where does Holmes say his disease comes from?
5. How is the disease transmitted?
6. How many doctors does Watson suggest might be consulted?
7. What does Dr. Watson know of Tapanuli fever or the Black Formosa Conuption?
8. How does Holmes force Watson to listen to him?
9. Name three of the items Watson says were on the mantelpiece.
10. What does Holmes suggest in order to balance Watson?
11. Where does Holmes send Watson to fetch Culverton Smith?
12. When does Smith say Watson should return?
13. What are Smith's "Prisons"?
14. Where does Watson tell Smith that Holmes contracted the disease?
15. Where does Holmes ask Watson to hide?
16. What does Holmes ask Smith to give him?
17. What does Smith say the coolies suffered from at the end?
18. How does Smith attempt to remove evidence?
19. What does Inspector Morton arrest Smith for?
20. Where does Holmes suggest he and Watson go to celebrate?

The Adventure of the Dying Detective Quiz - Mycroft Level

1. At what point in Watson's relationship with Holmes did this adventure occur?
2. How did Watson find out about Holmes's disease?
3. How long was Holmes supposed to have been ill?
4. Where does Mrs. Hudson think Holmes contracted the disease?
5. Why would Holmes think the Dutch might know about the disease?
6. Of Sir Jasper Meek, Penrose Fisher and Dr. Ainstree, who is the tropical disease authority?
7. How does Holmes force Watson to stay with him, and for how long?
8. Holmes uses an electrical metaphor to describe his feelings- what is it?
9. What adorns the walls of Holmes's room?
10. What coins does Watson happen to have with him, and how many?
11. With what does Holmes ask Watson to handle the ivory box?
12. Where is Watson sent to get Culverton Smith?
13. What neighborhood was this in?

14. What is the name of Smith's butler?
15. What disease does Watson suspect Smith may have suffered from?
16. Fill in Smith's quote, " I am here. _____, Holmes _____."
17. What does Holmes promise Smith he will forget?
18. What signal brings in Inspector Morton?
19. What three items does Holmes ask Smith to give him?
20. Victor Savage stood between whom and what?

The Dying Dectective

A M R S H U D S O N C W A T J V U G L Y A
D S E H Y F N E G A V A S R O T C I V E X
V U X E V I C T B E L B P R I N C E L Y O
E G E V A S E L I N E O P A Y M E N T S O
H A E B L A C K M D I S E A S E H U M T E
O R R F O R M O S A I P H U B E E S W A X
A T T S N O S P M I S N I O W I N D E B T
N O S T A W R D E V Q U E N L A I F V E H
O N N C S B L O E A Y C A S S M S T I C K
R G I T O J M S U M T O V X S P E O T P B
T S A O M O T P W O I N T I R Q E S C M A
O I R B R A L R Y R R T E V E I R C E V I
B O D A O C C O I N T O A U T A G W E T E V
A M A C F E B N E O H G A U N T R E E O O
R A J C K I C G O N T I L O W E R R D E R
T B F O C I W F J P U O B U R K E H G A Y
A L I Q A D A Q R L A U S T R E E T N A B
M R C U L V E R T O N S M I T H B F I C O
U D X R B B E L L A D O N N A C H U Y O X
S I R J A S P E R M E E K K C I S A D F A

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| DR WATSON | SIR JASPER MEEK |
| IVORY BOX | COOLIE |
| VICTOR SAVAGE | DR AINSTREE |
| LOWER BURKE STREET | DYING DETECTIVE |
| SUGAR LONGS | AUTHORITY |
| INSPECTOR | PRINCIPAL PAYMENTS |
| MRS HUDSON | HOLMES |
| UNTIDINESS | TOBACCO |
| SUMATRA | VASELINE |
| CULVERTON SMITH | BELLADONNA |
| BLACK FORMOSA | SIMPSONS |
| DISFASE | SPRING |
| GAUNT | REESWAX |
| CONTAGIOUS | MORTON |



Presentation by Jeff & Wanda Dow

Journalists at *The Baker Street Enquirer* "Observing Minds Want To Know" - were recently afforded an examination of a shoebox found in an attic at the estate of Roy Poi Doyle, a great grandnephew of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Using radio-isotope dating, spectrographic analysis and Elmer's Glue, they believe they have turned up a first draft of what later became known as "The Dying Detective." The journalists believe that Mr. Doyle long suppressed this manuscript as it showed his friend John H. Watson's writing skills in a less than flattering light. One note by Doyle suggests that "All the elements are here, but something doesn't seem perfectly right. I am unable, however, to put my finger on the deficiencies." According to another note written by Doyle on the last page, Dr. Watson was despondent over this, and considered Mr. Doyle's slight as very infuriating. "Watson tells me," the note says in part, "that this is like another shot in the shoulder - or leg." So, after over seventy years, for the first time anywhere, we present:

The Dining Detective

NARRATOR

Mrs. Hudson was a long-suffering woman. Not only was her first-floor flat invaded at all hours by throngs of singular and often undesirable characters, but her lodger showed an eccentricity and irregularity in his life which must have sorely tried her patience. So it was no surprise when she came to my rooms in the second year of my married life and told me of the conditions to which my poor friend was reduced.

MRS. HUDSON

He's eating, Dr. Watson. For three days he has done nothing but feed his bloomin' face. Muffins, kippers, eggs, toast, coffee. But that's not the worst of it.

WATSON

Eh?

MRS. HUDSON

He's having red wine with chicken.

WATSON

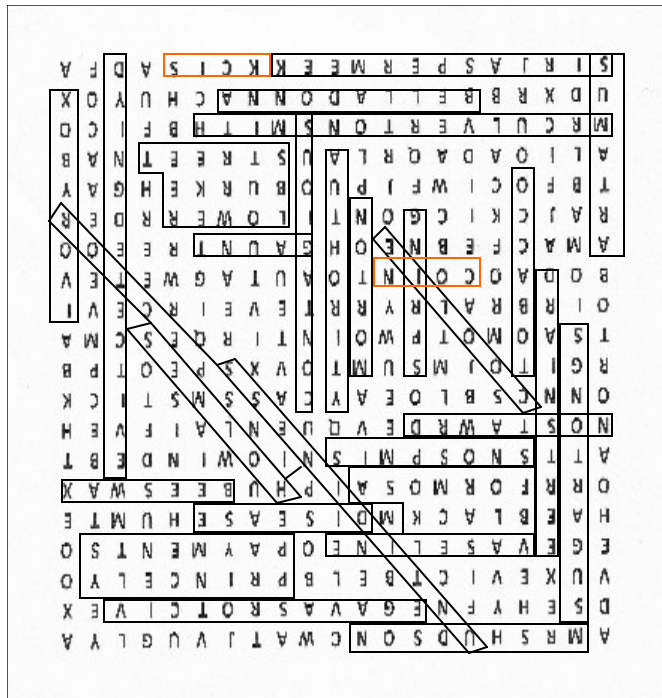
Why haven't you called a wine expert?

MRS. HUDSON

He wouldn't have it, sir. You know how masterful he is.

NARRATOR

He was indeed a deplorable sight. In the quiet hum of a November day, I could hear the clinking of fork and spoon against plate even before I stepped into his rooms. The table was piled high with biscuits, gravy boats, butter, potatoes, soup tureens and salad bowls. He shovelled spoonfuls of custard into his mouth.



HOLMES

(as Churchill)

Well, Watson, we seem to have fallen upon resplendent days.

WATSON

My dear fellow. You're obscenely huge!

HOLMES

Stand back! Stand right back! If you approach me, Watson, I shall eat this stalk of broccoli.

NARRATOR

Yes, Mrs. Hudson was right. He was more masterful than ever. It was agonizing, however, to see his nutritional faux pas: coffee *and* tea, butter *and* sour cream, milk *and* cookies.

WATSON

I only wish to help.

HOLMES

Exactly! You will help best by doing what you are told. I know what is the matter with me. It is an American disease from New Jersey — a thing the Newark natives know more about than we. One thing only is certain. It is infallibly fattening, and it is horribly contagious.

NARRATOR

Indeed, the hollandaise sauce, the spinach-stuffed crepes, the pop-tarts — they were all wonderfully enticing, and I felt my mouth filling with saliva until ...

HOLMES

No! No! This is mine! I demand separate checks. You shall not have this, Watson. Mrs. Hudson, more baklava.



WATSON

Holmes, you are not yourself. A sick man is but a child - a very large child - but a child nonetheless. Whether you like it or not, I will examine your symptoms and treat you for them.

NARRATOR

My hat was knocked off by a guava melon.

HOLMES

If I am to have a doctor whether I will or not, let me at least have someone in whom I have confidence.

WATSON

Then you have none in me?

HOLMES

Face it, Watson. Even you have put ketchup on your eggs.

WATSON

Such a remark is unworthy of you, Holmes.

HOLMES

You mean well, Watson. Shall I demonstrate your own ignorance? What do you know of coos-coos? Is rumaki to be served at room temperature? Where do you put the salad fork in a formal table-setting? This is only the beginning of my knowledge of domesticity.

WATSON

I must admit that ...

HOLMES

There are many strange pathological possibilities in America, Watson. I will allow you to seek help for me, but from the one I choose.

WATSON

By all means.

HOLMES

Have you anything in your pockets?

WATSON

I have five half crowns.

HOLMES

Any crackers? I fancy they would taste very good now.

WATSON

No crackers.

HOLMES

Very well, then. I would like you to fetch Mrs. Martha Stewart, of 13 Lower Burke Street.

WATSON

I never heard the name.

HOLMES

Possibly not. Mrs. Stewart is a well-known nutritionist and something of a domestic expert from Newark. She is very methodical, and I would like you to persuade her to come here

and give us the benefit of her unique experience. You will tell her exactly how you have left me. You will convey the very impression which is in your own mind. These oysters are excellent, by the way. Oh, I am wandering. Strange how the stomach controls the brain. What was I saying?

WATSON

My directions for Martha Stewart.

HOLMES

Ah, yes, I remember. My waist size depends upon it. Plead with her, Watson. There is no good feeling between us. Her husband, Watson — I had suspicions of foul play and I allowed Mrs. Stewart to see it. The man died horribly in a bathtub full of Thousand Island salad dressing. She has a grudge against me.

WATSON

Very well, Holmes.

HOLMES

Persuade her to come and then return in front of her. Make any excuse so as not to come with her. Tell her you must go to the docks to await the next shipment of oysters.

NARRATOR

I left him full - very full. He had torn a leg from the goose upon the credenza and was brandishing it as if he were D'artagnan. Mrs. Hudson was waiting, trembling and weeping in the passage, muttering something about how long it would take to clean all the dishes. As I stood whistling for a cab, a man came on me through the fog.

MORTON

How is Mr. Holmes?

WATSON

He is stuffed, Inspector Morton, completely stuffed.

MORTON

I saw the vegetable vendor pull up.

NARRATOR

My humble name and title did not appear to impress Mrs. Martha Stewart of Lower Burke Street. The butler's soothing explanations failed to gain me entrance, so I pushed into the room, knowing that Holmes' wardrobe depended upon my promptness.

STEWART

What is the meaning of this intrusion?

WATSON

I am sorry but the matter cannot be delayed. Mr. Sherlock Holmes ...

STEWART

Have you come from Holmes?

WATSON

I have just left him.



STEWART

How is he?

WATSON

He is desperately large. He was screaming for more vinaigrette when I left.

STEWART

I am sorry to hear this. I only know Mr. Holmes through some business dealings which we have had. He is an amateur of crime, as I am of nutrition and dining and domestic projects and crocheting and knitting and woodworking and linoleum block cutting and

WATSON

It was on account of your special knowledge that Mr. Holmes desired to see you.

STEWART

Why should Mr. Holmes think that I could help him in his trouble?

WATSON

Because of your knowledge of nutrition.

STEWART

Oh, that's it, is it? How long has he been eating?

WATSON

About three days.

STEWART

Is he satiated?

WATSON

By no means no. And he had barely touched his chicken noodle soup.

STEWART

This sounds serious. It would be inhuman not to answer his call. I very much resent any interruption to my work, Dr. Watson, but this case is certainly exceptional. I will come with you at once.

WATSON

I have another appointment.

STEWART

Very good. I will go alone. I have a note of Mr. Holmes' address.

NARRATOR

It was with a sinking heart that I re-entered Holmes's abode. Although he appeared to be eating a bit less - there were still canapes and asparagus stalks on the plates - Holmes had slipped on his robe. There could be no denying the corpulent figure beneath him - a rotundity of Mycroftian proportions.

HOLMES

Is she coming?

WATSON

Yes.

HOLMES

Admirable, Watson. You are the best of messengers, even if you don't carry crackers in your pockets.

WATSON

I must wait and hear her opinion, Holmes.

HOLMES

Of course you must. But I have reasons to believe that her opinion would be very much more frank and valuable if she imagines that we are alone. If memory serves me correctly, Mrs. Stewart is quite nearsighted. If you hold these in your hands and stand in the corner, I fancy she will think you are no more than a giant stalk of celery.

WATSON

My dear Holmes!

HOLMES

I fear there is no alternative - unless you'd rather be a lime tree. There are the wheels, Watson. Quick, man, if you love me. And don't budge, whatever happens - whatever happens, do you hear? Just listen with all your ears.

STEWART

Holmes. Can't you stop eating, Holmes?

HOLMES

Ah, yes, Mrs. Martha Stewart. Please. Have some boullabaise.

STEWART

I see you are quite well.

HOLMES

Very well indeed. The french toast is rather excellent.

STEWART

Tell me, Mr. Holmes. Have you always had such an excellent appetite?

HOLMES

On occasion after solving a case.

STEWART

Tell me, Mr. Holmes. How long before you replace your entire wardrobe?

HOLMES

That's easy enough done. I still have plenty of money left over after solving the Priory School mystery.

STEWART

Tell me, Mr. Holmes. In a luncheon setting, where does the water goblet go in relation to the wine glass?

HOLMES

Elementary: to the left, Mrs. Stewart. To the left.

STEWART

I see we are expanding our mind as well as our shirt size, Mr. Holmes.



HOLMES

It can't be helped with these orange meringue souffles. Mrs. Hudson has outdone herself.

STEWART

You're precious near the end, Mr. Holmes. Only a matter of time before your duodenum fills to its maximum and bursts. Takes you as a cramp, I fancy.

HOLMES

Now that you mention it, I do feel a bit...full.

STEWART

But you can't stop eating, can you?

HOLMES

Oh, those bananas are scrumptious. Please, help yourself.

STEWART

Thank you, no.

HOLMES

Oh, dear.

STEWART

What is it?

HOLMES

Either...the bananas have gone bad...or...oh, dear.

STEWART

Another cramp, is it?

HOLMES

I don't know.

STEWART

In a formal dessert course, are the cup and saucer above or below the dessert plate?

HOLMES

Neither...no, wait. It...I...the cup ...

STEWART

Things getting a little hazy, Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES

Stew, I must have more stew. And oysters. Lots of oysters.

STEWART

Speaking of food, do you remember receiving a package recently?

HOLMES

Package...mushrooms...claret...

STEWART

A bird, Holmes. A large goose.

HOLMES

Yes, yes, I do. Three days...ago. Excellent with an orange glaze.

STEWART

That was no ordinary bird. The cloves I put in it have caused you to eat insatiably.

HOLMES

No. I thought...it was just...a vitamin deficiency.

STEWART

Being a nutritionist I know of these things.

HOLMES

Why...why...would...why...?

STEWART

You nearly had it solved, Mr. Holmes. My husband died the same way - he wanted my magazine and half the profits from my books. You were about to trace his death to me. What's good for the goose is good for the gander, if you get my drift.

HOLMES

Husband...goose...oysters...

STEWART

Had you left me alone, I wouldn't have bothered you. You'd still be a size six. But no, you had to get curious. Well, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I'm going to sit here and watch you expand.

HOLMES

Please...I'd like...

STEWART

Like what? Speak up.

HOLMES

I'd like espresso with my caramel brownies.

STEWART

I don't think so, Holmes. Is there anything else I can get for you, my dear departing friend?

HOLMES

A napkin and the check.

STEWART

What is the meaning of this?

HOLMES

The best way of successfully acting a part is to be it. For three days I have done nothing but eat. Do I hear the step of a friend?

MORTON

I arrest you on the charge of the murder of one extra large Culverton Stewart.

HOLMES

And you might add of the attempted murder of an incredibly expanding Sherlock Holmes.



STEWART

You've got nothing on me. You'll pretend that I have said anything which you may invent which will corroborate these insane suspicions. You can lie as you like, Holmes. My word is as good as yours.

HOLMES

My dear Watson, I had completely forgotten. To think that I should have overlooked a vegetable as large as you.

STEWART

Ohhh, I thought that celery looked a little too brown.

HOLMES

I shall follow you when I am dressed, Inspector. You won't be offended, Watson. You will realize that among your many talents dissimulation finds no place, and that if you had shared my secret you would never have been able to impress Stewart with the urgent necessity of her presence, which was the vital point of the whole scheme.

WATSON

But your appearance, Holmes - your - your stomach.

HOLMES

A device of my own design. A pillow of just the right dimensions, held close with several wraps of bedsheets. And not a few biscuits and raspberry torts and subgum chicken anda blintz or two and ...

WATSON

But why would you not let me near you?

HOLMES

Do you imagine that I have no respect for your medical talents? Could I fancy that your astute judgement would pass a dining man? At four yards I could deceive you. If I failed to do so, who would bring Mrs. Martha Stewart to my grasp? No, Watson, I would not touch that goose. Could there have been another carbuncle stuck in its crop? I think not. Thank you, Watson. You must help me off with my pillow and on with my coat. When we have finished at the police station, I think that something nutritious at Simpson's would not be out of place.

WATSON

Holmes!

ARTICLE THANKS TO CLAUDE SALOMON J R Soc Med. Feb 2002; 95(2): 101-103. PMID: PMC1279324 Sherlock Holmes and a biological weapon Setu K Vora, MD

THE DYING DETECTIVE

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes during exciting times. He graduated from Edinburgh University Medical College in 1881, and Sherlock Holmes made his appearance (in *The Study in Scarlet*) in 1886. This was the golden age of microbiology, with landmark discoveries by Koch, Ehrlich and Pasteur amongst others, and the British Empire was at its height. It is not surprising that the Sherlock Holmes stories contain numerous references to infectious diseases, either local or imported from the farflung colonies. In the course of his adventures Sherlock Holmes became acquainted with bioterrorism.

In *The Adventure of the Dying Detective*¹ an esoteric fatal infectious disease called the Tapanuli fever is used as a biological weapon by a criminal named Culverton Smith. Holmes speaks of him thus to his friend Dr Watson:

'It may surprise you to know that the man upon earth who is best versed in this disease is not a medical man, but a planter. Mr. Culverton Smith is a well known resident of Sumatra, now visiting London. An outbreak of the disease upon his plantation, which was distant from medical aid, caused him to study it himself, with some rather far-reaching consequences.'

Smith cultured the bacteria on gelatin, brought the specimens back to London and infected his nephew, who died within four days. Sherlock Holmes suspected homicide. Culverton Smith then attempts to infect Holmes, but Holmes anticipates and avoids the booby trap. He fakes the illness very cleverly, deceiving even Watson, who describes him with clinical precision!

'He was indeed a deplorable spectacle. In the dim light of a foggy November day the sick room was a gloomy spot, but it was that gaunt, wasted face staring at me from the bed which sent a chill to my heart. His eyes had the brightness of fever, there was a hectic flush upon either cheek, and dark crusts clung to his lips; the thin hands upon the coverlet twitched incessantly, his voice was croaking and spasmodic.'

Convinced that Holmes is dying, Watson is sent to persuade Culverton Smith to come and treat him. Dr Watson narrates his meeting with Smith.

"Have you come from Holmes?" he [Smith] asked.

"I have just left him."

"What about Holmes? How is he?"

"He is desperately ill. That is why I have come."

The man motioned me to a chair, and turned to resume his own. As he did so I caught a glimpse of his face in the mirror over the mantelpiece. I could have sworn that it was set in a malicious and abominable smile. Yet I persuaded myself that it must have been some nervous contraction which I had surprised, for he turned to me an instant later with genuine concern upon his features. "I am sorry to hear this," said he. "I only know Mr Holmes through some business dealings which we have had, but I have every respect for his talents and his character. He is an amateur of crime, as I am of disease. For him the villain, for me the microbe. There are my prisons," he continued, pointing to a row of bottles and jars which stood upon a side table. "Among those gelatine cultivations some of the very worst offenders in the world are now doing time."

Smith is convinced that his plan to infect and kill Holmes is working. He behaves as predicted by Holmes. By allowing Smith to gloat over him, Holmes draws him to confess and also reveal the modus operandi. Watson secretly witnesses the conversation:

"Listen now! Can you remember any unusual incident in your life just about the time your symptoms began?"

"No, no: nothing."

"Think again."

"I'm too ill to think."

"Well, then, I'll help you. Did anything come by post?"

"By post?"

"A box by chance?"

"I'm fainting—I'm gone!"



"Listen, Holmes!" There was a sound as if he was shaking the dying man, and it was all that I could do to hold myself quiet in my hiding-place. 'You must hear me. You shall hear me. Do you remember a box - an ivory box? It came on Wednesday. You opened it - do you remember?'"

"Yes, yes. I opened it. There was a sharp spring inside it. Some joke..."

"It was no joke, as you will find to your cost. You fool, you would have it and you have got it. Who asked you to cross my path? if you had left me alone I would not have hurt you."

Sherlock Holmes gets Culverton Smith arrested on the charges of murder and attempted murder, and after the arrest Holmes takes Watson into his confidence:

"No, Watson, I would not touch that box. You can just see if you look at it sideways where the sharp spring like a viper's tooth emerges as you open it. I dare say it was by some such device that poor Savage, who stood between this monster and a reversion, was done to death. My correspondence, however is, as you know, a varied one, and I am somewhat upon my guard against any packages which reach me..."

What can be deduced about 'Tapanuli fever' or 'the black corruption of Formosa'? This infectious disease must be prevalent in South-East Asia and should have outbreaks among plantation workers in Sumatra—Indonesia. It should have a short incubation period and a high case fatality rate. The organism should be easily cultured and transmissible by needlestick injury. Holmes avoids examination by telling Watson that disease is 'highly contagious by touch'. This, it emerges, was only a ruse to prevent Watson from finding out about the faked illness. The disease expert Culverton Smith shakes Holmes and touches him without any concern for his own safety.

The candidate infectious disease should also explain the clinical features that Holmes simulated so cleverly. Tapanuli fever should cause fever, anorexia, severe fatigue and sweating. The patient would also have cramping body ache, dyspnoea, cough and a croaking and feeble voice. Lips would have dark crusts and pupils would be dilated. Delirium usually heralds imminent death in this disease. Readers are referred to the definitive report on this matter by Sodeman². Among the possible causes are scrub typhus, anthrax, typhoid fever and primary septicaemic plague. Sodeman rightly remarks that Conan Doyle is unlikely to have selected a commonplace disease such as typhoid fever or anthrax as the 'deadly Asiatic infection' for use in murder. Typhus endemic in South-East Asia, including Sumatra, is an attractive possibility. It is caused by *Rickettsia tsutsugamushi* transmitted by mites or chiggers. It could account for an earlier reference made by Sherlock Holmes to 'the giant rat of Sumatra'. Holmes was involved in the investigation of the ship *Matilda Briggs* which seems to have carried a cargo of rats from Sumatra³. Culverton Smith might have imported these rats. Holmes was probably aware of the role of Sumatran rats as a natural host of the vector for the disease—hence his familiarity with the Tapanuli fever. However, scrub typhus is unlikely to be Tapanuli fever, because rickettsia would be difficult to culture on gelatin. And although it is a serious infection, case fatality is not very high, making it a poor choice as a murder weapon.

The presence of dysphonia suggests the possibility of diphtheria. There are reports of non-toxicogenic strains of *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* that cause severe systemic disease with aggressive course and high mortality. An outbreak of severe invasive infection by non-toxicogenic *C. diphtheriae* among Swiss intravenous drug users⁴ suggests that needle-stick injury could be a mode of transmis-

sion. But once again, diphtheria was a well-known local disease in England and therefore unlikely to have been chosen by Conan Doyle.

New evidence strongly supports the case for acute septicaemic melioidosis, as suggested by Sodeman. Whitmore and Krishnaswami first reported melioidosis in 1912 among the morphine addicts in Rangoon, Burma. They described acute septicaemic melioidosis with rapid onset, a short course and high mortality. Melioidosis, also known as Whitmore's disease, is caused by *Berkholderia pseudomallei* infection. Conan Doyle could have come across Whitmore and Krishnaswami's report in his medical readings before writing this particular story in 1913. In 1987 melioidosis was responsible for 20% of all cases of community-acquired septicaemia in a large study in Thailand⁵, which is geographically similar to Sumatra—Indonesia. *B. pseudomallei* was the single most common organism isolated in the monsoon months from July to September, and in August it caused 50% of all documented cases of community-acquired septicaemia. The disease commonly affects rice paddy farmers, and Culverton Smith could have studied septicaemic melioidosis among his plantation workers in Sumatra. In 1987, even with the availability of potent antibiotics, mortality from septicaemic melioidosis was very high at 68%. Over 50% of deaths occurred within 48 hours. Melioidosis can cause the clinical features simulated by Sherlock Holmes. In the study of septicaemic melioidosis reported from Thailand, most of the patients became profoundly ill soon after the onset of fever. Metabolic acidosis and blood-borne pneumonia was found to be common, which could explain why Holmes was 'struggling for breath' and coughing. A patient with such a severe septic illness is likely to have a 'feeble' croaking voice. Septic shock would explain the severe fatigue, anorexia, cold sweats and delirium. Dark crusts on the lips could be from the subcutaneous abscesses seen with melioidosis or activation of herpes labialis. *B. pseudomallei* is culturable in gelatin agar and could easily have been imported to England from the plantations of Sumatra. To this day, according to a research letter published in *The Lancet*, almost all cases of melioidosis in England are imported from South-East Asia and tropical Australia⁶. Even more fascinating is a *Lancet* letter⁷ entitled 'A deadly thorn', describing the case of a 61-year-old man who returned to England after a 2-week holiday in Thailand. While gardening the next day he stood on a large thorn which penetrated his left heel through the sole of the shoes that he had worn throughout his vacation in Thailand. He developed melioidosis and died. The skin and shoes were probably colonized with *B. pseudomallei* in Thailand, and the thorn then inoculated the bacteria. This case provides modern evidence to strengthen the case for melioidosis as the 'deadly Asiatic disease' described by Conan Doyle.

If *B. pseudomallei* was indeed the murder weapon, Culverton Smith chose well. Should his victim escape death from acute septicaemic melioidosis, there was always a strong possibility of late relapse or rupture of a visceral abscess. Delayed death from melioidosis has earned it the name of 'the Vietnamese time bomb'⁸. The Centers for

Berkholderia pseudomallei In Vitro



Microscopic View Typical Colonies On Agar



<http://www.infamyminiatures.com/sherlock-holmes/>

in our meeting announcements. As we currently have sufficient funds in our vault, this meeting carried \$60 to donate.

Mark Levitt has agreed to arrange the Spring Gathering in Orlando, possibly in conjunction with the Titanic display. Developments will be announced in the future.

Wanda Dow mentioned that the Carrollwood Players in Tampa will be doing "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily" in February/March of next year, which could be a possible Diogenes venue.

Disease Control and Prevention have identified *B. pseudomallei* as a potential agent for bioterrorism⁹. Culverton Smith's use of the postal service to eliver the lethal infection has an echo today. Life, sometimes regrettably, does imitate art.

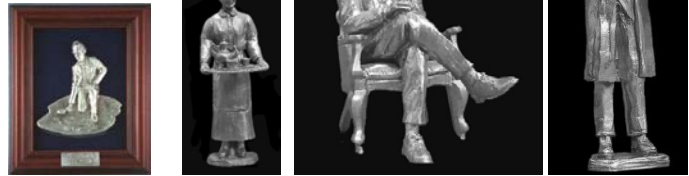
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Articles from Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine are provided here courtesy of Royal Society of Medicine Press.

Announcements

Mike Bryan suggested that our club donate to The Beacon Society, an organization sponsored by the Baker Street Irregulars to bring the world of Sherlock Holmes to school children. The website is: <http://beaconsociety.com/>. Previously, we have collected funds to purchase children's Sherlockian books to donate to libraries. However, as libraries are pruning their book collections to make space for computers, they are no longer interested in acquiring more. We agreed that we will request donations to the Beacon Society



These images of Holmesian miniatures were found at <http://www.Diorama-sandcleverthings.com/2011/01/sherlock-in-miniature-and-model.html>

Mycroft Level 1. The second year of his married life. 2. Mrs. Hudson. 3. Since Wednesday. Three days. 4. at Rothenhithe, in an alley near the river. 5. He said it was a coolie disease from Sumatra which was a Dutch colony. 6. Dr. Ainsree was "the greatest living authority upon tropical disease." 7. He locked the door and kept the key. Two hours. It was 4pm and he asked him to wait until 6pm. 8. I wonder how a battery feels when it pours electricity into a non-conductor? 9. Pictures of celebrated criminals. 10. Five half-crowns and a good deal of silver. 11. Sugar-tongs. 12. 13 Lower Burke Street 13. In the vague borderland between Notting Hill and Kensington. 14. Staples. 15. Rickets. 16. Coals of fire. Coals of fire. 17. About Victor Savage's death. 18. Smith turned up the gas. 19. Water, a match and a cigarette. 20. He stood between this monster (Smith) and a reversion. Watson Level 1. Mrs. Hudson. 2. Three days. 3. November. 4. Sumatra. 5. By touch. 6. He names three. 7. Nothing. 8. He leaps up, locks the door and keeps the key. 9. A litter of pipes, tobacco-pouches, syringes, penknives, revolver-cartridges, and other debris was scattered over it. In the midst of these was a small black and white ivory box with a sliding lid. 10. Put the half-crowns in his watch pocket and the rest of his change in his left trouser pocket. 11. 13 Lower Burke Street. 12. Tomorrow morning. 13. A row of bottles and jars which stood upon a side table. 14. He had been working among Chinese sailors down in the docks. 15. Behind the head of his bed. 16. Water at first, then a match and a cigarette. 17. The coolies used to do some squatting towards the end. Takes you as crimp. 18. He puts the poison box in his pocket. 19. The murder of Victor Savage. Holmes also suggests the attempted murder of Sherlock Holmes. 20. Simpson's.



The Musgrave Ritual

Whose was it?

His who is gone.

Who shall have it?

He who will come.

Where was the sun?

Over the oak.

Where was the shadow?

Under the elm.

How was it stepped?

North by ten and by ten, east by
five and by five,

south by two and by two,

west by one and by one, and

so under.

What shall we give for it?

All that is ours.

Why should we give it?

For the sake of the trust.

221B

Here dwell together still two men of note
Who never lived and so can never die:
How very near they seem, yet how remote
That age before the world went all awry.
But still the game's afoot for those with ears
Attuned to catch the distant view-halloo:
England is England yet, for all our fears—
Only those things the heart *believes* are
true.

A yellow fog swirls past the window-pane
As night descends upon this fabled street:
A lonely hansom splashes through the rain,
The ghostly gas lamps fail at twenty feet.
Here, though the world explode, these two
survive,
And it is always eighteen ninety-five.

Vincent Starrett

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, *Master of the House* (Master of Ceremonies at most gatherings, host of The Wessex Cup)

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

Wanda & Jeff Dow, *The Papers on the Sundial* (Communications, Website and Bookkeeping)

Mike Bryan, *The Unopened Newspaper* (Film Festivals and The Marshall Wood Fund)

