

P.P. of Fers in the News



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ELEMENTARY MR. ED . . .

The Manatee County chapter of the world famous Baker Street Irregulars, a worldwide Sherlock Holmes study group, will be giving a hearty rah rah before the fourth race at Tampa Downs next Feb. 9. The race, the Wessex Cup, is appropriately named

for a character in one of Holmes' adventures. It's a first for the group, and Dr. Benton Wood, chaplain for the Irregulars, says everyone is excited. At least as excited as a proper English gentleman ever gets. By the way, Dr. Wood lives on Holmes Beach.

(Above): The several errors notwithstanding, we appreciated the "plug" (sorry) for our "Nessex Cup".

(Below) Mike's nifty parody appeared in the Jan. '91 issue of "Wheelwrightings" published by the Hansom Cabs of John Clayton Scion of Peoria, Ill.

Sherlock at the Bat

Charles Michael Carroll

The outlook wasn't brilliant down in Baker Street that day. Both Sherlock Holmes and Watson found their lives had turned blasé. The Hippocratic doctor had once more his rounds resumed. But life for Sherlock Holmes was by ennui and drugs consumed.

But then by post a letter came, scribed in a foreign hand. The watermark and quality bespoke someone quite grand. "I'll call on you tonight at eight, the time I trust you'll save. The matter is a private one, the consequences grave."

At eight o'clock a brougham pulled up, a tread upon a stair Announced a regal visitor with dominating air; Quite richly dressed, he entered, said, "My real name do not ask. I trust you won't take umbrage if I choose to wear a mask."

Our visitor was not aware of Sherlock's cunning art; In masquerade and acting skill he stood a bit apart. "Your Majesty should state his case," he said with a smile benign, "I recognize Wilhelm Gottsreich, Grand Duke of Burg Felstein."

"You're right!" he cried, "I am the King!" His veil he tore aside. "This matter is a serious one, but I have naught to hide. I made a youthful error once, for now 'tis plain to see That I should never have been friends with Adler, Irene."

"Are you acquainted with that diva who was all that rage? Though now retired, she once reigned o'er the operatic stage. I met her when she sang in Warsaw. What a voice divine! In those days I was sure that I would make her queen of mine!

"I wrote her compromising notes, and now I want them back. I fear that she will use them for the mail that's known as black." "Your Majesty does fret too much, it's very clear to me. If she claims that you wrote them once, we'll claim a forgery."

"The paper was my private stock." "They stole it." "But my seal?" "A counterfeit." "My photograph?" "They bought it in a deal." "We both were in the photograph." "Now that's a true faux pas. We must retrieve the photo, if we can, within the law."

"Your Majesty must buy it; has no effort yet availed?" "We've tried both theft and purchase, but my agents all have failed." "Ah, well," said Holmes while yawning, "then I'll try with all my might. I'll need some funds to work with; thank you, Sir, and so good-night."

"Now, Watson, I would much prefer to have a little chat, And get your wise opinion on this regal matter, that Has stirred up such emotion in the Kingdom of Bohème. Please come around tomorrow and I'll tell you how things seem."

On Saturday at three I found myself in our old room. Where shortly Sherlock Holmes appeared in costume of a groom. He then recited to me an adventure so outré I found myself deprived of words, it took my breath away.

It seems that in the groom's disguise which he used as a dodge He managed to survey the residence, Briony Lodge. He soon discovered that Miss Adler and her fiancé Intended to be married, surely on that very day.

He followed them to Edgeware Road, St. Monica's, he said, And there he served as witness while the two of them were wed. By twelve o'clock the deed was done, her future all arranged, To Mrs. Godfrey Norton, Irene Adler now changed.

"Now, Watson, we must move, and very quickly, too, I wot. They will be leaving London soon, but I am hoping not Before I have a chance to get that picture for the King. We'll stage a little drama, just to prove 'The play's the thing!'"

"Can you bend the law a little? There is some chance of arrest." "I'll take my chances when the cause is numbered in the best." He handed me my weapon, the smoke-bomb that plumbers ply, And he gave me my instructions, just to fling the thing and fly.

He left for a brief moment, then behold! within my scan There stood a simple-minded Nonconformist clergyman. The baggy trousers, broad black hat, and overt lack of guile, All reinforced his amiable and sympathetic smile.

We soon were outside Briony Lodge, where Holmes had ranged his cast; An argument, a scuffle, and before a moment passed The clergyman was injured, carried inside for first aid. 'Twas now my place to see the gambit properly was played.

My station by the window gave a view inside the room. I watched as Holmes was carried in, laid out as for his tomb. They raised the window just a bit. I took that as my cue. I waited till their backs were turned, tossed in my bomb and flew.

Ten minutes more and Pastor Holmes rejoined me, as we planned: His ruse had worked, when "Fire!" was called, the lady quickly scanned A panel just behind the hearth, to make sure all was well. "I think that's all I need to know, that gesture rang a bell

"Which will resound to her dismay. In times of danger dire "The fairer sex will save her dearest thing from out the fire. "I think that we may rest content; we've found where she would hide "That photo. Now to get it." [But "Strike one!" the umpire cried.]

"What now?" I said. And Holmes: "We're nearly finished with our quest. Tomorrow we will call on her, but ere she greets her guest "The evidence I shall preempt, and then the game 's mate.' "For retribution, blackmail or revenge 'twill be too late."

We took a cab to Baker Street; as we approached our door We saw a group of people who were going on before. "Good evening, Mister Sherlock Holmes," a voice did us accost. A youth in heavy ulster hurried by and soon was lost.

"I know that voice, now what the deuce, whoever could that be? "You recognized it, Watson?" "No, 'twas very strange to me." "I don't intend to worry; if the day brings nothing new "We have success within our grasp." [The umpire said, "Strike two!"]

'Twas early Sunday morning when the King rushed up the stair; "You really have secured it?" "Well, I know precisely where "The lady has it hidden. In a very little while "We should have it in hand by means of just a little guile.

"She's married." "Married? When? To whom? Indeed, how can that be?" "Just yesterday, to Godfrey Norton; I was there, you see." "My brougham is waiting, let's be off, the details later tell. "Ah, what a queen she would have made! But better now, farewell!"

When we arrived at Briony Lodge, the door was open wide, Except for an old servant, there was nobody inside. When Holmes rushed to the hiding-place, a tug released the frame, A photograph of Irene Adler and a letter came

Pell-mell into his hand, the message was distinctly plain. The Nortons had departed on the five-fifteen boat train. "You need not be concerned, I love a better man than he; "The King may do what'er he will, no harm will come from me."

"The photograph and letters I will keep, and while they're near "They are my sole security, your client need not fear. "You took me in completely, Sir, you did it very well "Till I heard the alarm of fire. That truly rang a bell.

"I thought there was one gesture which would give me some delight, "And that is why I tempted fate by wishing you good-night. "They told me if the King employed an agent, 'twould be you. "So, Mister Sherlock Holmes, I bid you now a fond adieu."

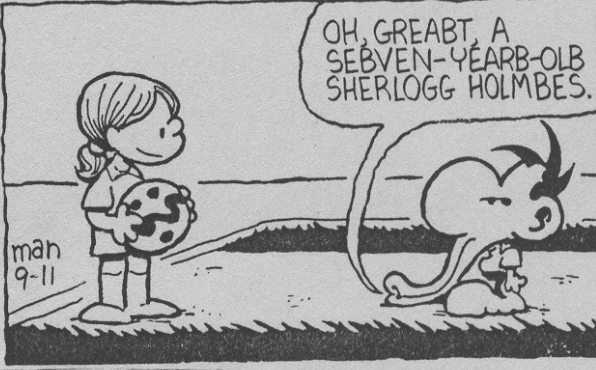
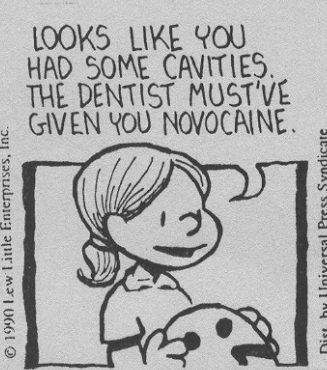
"Oh what a woman!" said the King. "The Queen she would have made!" "She is indeed a rarity, just look how she has played "Us all for fools. Now, Watson, when the record you set down "Record her as *The Woman*, though she never wore the crown."

Somewhere in Queen Victoria's realm the sun is shining bright; Somewhere the moon is beaming down upon a peaceful night. From Ottawa, Khartoum, Penang, to Afghan's desert plain Her faithful subjects give their thanks for her maternal reign.

Throughout that splendid Empire her dear subjects sport with glee, In Birmingham, in Sussex, and in far Trincomalee. In Holborn men are laughing, in the West End children shout, But Baker Street is joyless, mighty Sherlock Holmes has struck out.

(With apologies to E. L. Thayer)

Sibling Revelry



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