



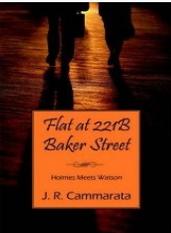
2009

Communication No. 288

The Pleasant Places of Florida

From the Papers on the Sundial:

Good grief! Time seems to be slipping through our hands! It's March already! Hope you enjoy this latest epistle of info.



Flat at 221B Baker Street

Type of material: Trade Paperback Publisher: Outskirts Press, Inc. Denver, CO Year: 2006 Author: J. R. Cammarata Price: \$15.95

It is with heavy heart that I take up my pen to write this review. This is a

lengthy and promising compendium of Sherlockian tales folded into a novel format. It is set in 1988 – 89 and involves a hero who – “Finishing his last semester at Cambridge Geoff thought it was time to venture into London and seek his fortune.” It turns out that ‘Geoff’ is the descendant of Sherlock’s brother, Oliver (W?) Holmes, and he plans, at age thirty, to begin a career as a private investigator.

The book details some six or seven cases investigated by Geoffrey S. Holmes and his self-proclaimed assistant, one Doctor Bridget Watson Burns; yes, a descendant of That Doctor Watson. On the plus side, the cases were interesting and generally well-presented. The solutions were not easy to see and the hero did some good detection work, frequently surprising the reader with his deductions and observations. All-in-all, the narrative was intriguing.

On the other hand, the editing of the manuscript was non-existent. It was full of errors; punctuation, spelling, usage and even terminology. Dialogue was especially difficult to follow, as transitions from speeches by one person to another’s words were often blurred and even occurred in the same paragraphs. Slang terms were misused, American and British idioms were confused and viewpoints were scrambled from character to character in the same scene. Quotes were often mixed with author’s comments or ‘stage directions.’

At some points, reading the narrative became quite difficult, with all the puzzling punctuation and the garbled dialogue. Further, there were a number of poorly structured and presented sexual scenes in the book. The author could have benefited from reading some well-written modern Romance novels. I can’t even begin to count the number of times one character or another ‘lied’ down somewhere and the gross sexuality at some points was unpleasant. It was especially

sad because the sexual content was often integral to the tale and could have been an asset, but instead suffered greatly from poor presentation.

These items are unfortunate, as the author’s storyline and characters are interesting and imaginative. The entire work could benefit from a good editor with a knowledge of the differences between modern UK English and American English as well as some ruthless applications of punctuation and Romance.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, February, 2009.

The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes

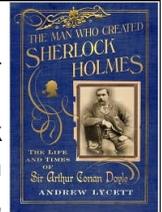
Reviewed by Carl L. Heifetz a.k.a. G. Norton, Esquire

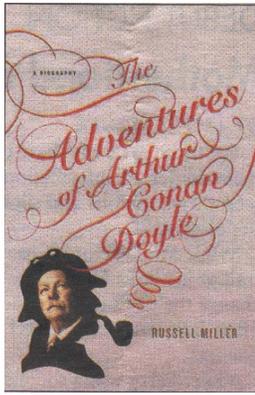
Those of us who are dyed in the wool Sherlock Holmes fans never seem to be able to learn enough about his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D. Although while “playing the game,” we like to refer to him with tongue in cheek as “the Literary Agent,” we also recognize that this distinguished gentleman led a full and exciting life. Unfortunately, fights between presumptive heirs had previously restricted accessibility to much of Doyle’s personal papers and notes. Thus, although many interesting biographies have been published, their revelations were limited by lack of access to much of the primary material.

This situation has now been rectified by the publication, in 2007, of a biography entitled *The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* by Andrew Lycett (published by Free Press, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney; 559 pp). This volume is replete with details of Doyle’s personal life as drawn from personal papers, letters to and from Doyle, that were never before revealed - not even in Doyle’s autobiography, *Memories and Adventures* as well as a great deal of published material from such diverse sources as contemporary newspapers reports and program lists. Although chock full of details, the text flows easily and the book is a good read. As with all detailed complete biographies, there are some embarrassing items: Doyle’s treatment of his first set of children as compared to the more loving devotion to the second group, his dalliance with his future “trophy wife” while his “starter wife” slowly succumbs to tuberculosis, and his unremitting support for spiritualism and the existence of faeries.

Of course, paramount to our great interest, there is much material on the development of Sherlock Holmes and Doyle’s mentor Dr. Joseph Bell, as well as the more adventuress aspects of Doyle’s life in several wars.

I thoroughly recommend this book as a must for serious fans of Dr. Doyle and Sherlock Holmes.





Conan Doyle Steps Out Of The Shadow Of Sherlock Holmes

By Chris Scott

The "death" of Sherlock Holmes in 1893's "The Final Problem" sparked world-wide grief. As recounted by Russell Miller in *The Adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle*, "The Prince of Wales was said to be particularly anguished. In the City of London, workers

sported black armbands or wore black mourning crepe tied round their top hats; in New York 'Keep Holmes Alive' societies sprang into being." Conan Doyle, by then one of the world's most popular authors, found himself reviled - one old lady hit him with her handbag. But he'd had enough of Holmes and was happy to send him over the Reichenbach Falls in Moriarty's grasp. The detective had come to eclipse everything Conan Doyle did. He wanted to move on, saying the killing of Holmes was self-defense, "since if I had not killed him, he would certainly have killed me."

Miller's new biography of Conan Doyle is a masterful compilation of the life and times of the man who, despite his efforts at literary homicide, is remembered principally as the creator of Holmes and his friend and colleague, Dr. Watson. One of the joys of the book is to see Conan Doyle's myriad inspirations for the characters, locations and plots with which Conan Doyle filled his most famous stories. Miller presents Dr. Joseph Bell, one of Conan Doyle's instructors at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, who could deduce a patient's illness at a glance by observing what others merely saw. The plot of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is revealed to have originated in a chance encounter with a young journalist on a sea voyage from South Africa. Conan Doyle himself, and his experience as a struggling physician, provided a model for Dr. Watson, the chronicler of Holmes' remarkable skills. But as Conan Doyle always took pains to point out, his life consisted of much more than Sherlock Holmes. Miller's book therefore emphasizes the "other" Conan Doyle, the man whose long life was filled with adventures every bit as wondrous and sometimes as dangerous as any fictional detective.

As a writer, Conan Doyle made his reputation on historical novels and short stories, painstakingly researched works that sold well but that never received the serious acclaim he hoped for. His love of action and his jingoistic patriotism led him to volunteer for service

in the Boer War and World War I, both of which he defended tirelessly even as they became bloody morasses. On the home front, the firmly anti-religious author often fought for reform, whether railing against Britain's archaic divorce laws, or championing those wrongfully accused of crime. He was a formidable advocate, Miller notes, because "once Conan Doyle made up his mind he was unstoppable, impervious to argument, blind to contradictory evidence, untroubled by doubt." But his final crusade, in the cause of spiritualism, nearly destroyed his reputation, leading as it did to a published article in which he forcefully presented "proof" for the existence of fairies.

Conan Doyle was a remarkable, complicated man and *The Adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle* does great justice to this great author, finally bringing him out of the shadow of his greatest creation.

BBC is making a modern-day Holmes! According to the Dec. 19, 2008 Daily Telegraph, Martin Freeman will play Dr. Watson and Benedict Cumberbatch, the famous sleuth. Writers are Steven Moffat (*Dr. Who*) and Mark Gatiss (*League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*), who, although bringing everything up to present day, have retained the Baker Street address and the evil Moriarty.

Says Moffat (whose storylines we LOVE from Who!) "Everything that matters about Holmes and Watson is the same. Conan Doyle's original stories were never about frock coats and gas light. They're about brilliant deduction, dreadful villains and blood-curdling crimes—and, frankly, the hell with the crinoline. Other detectives have cases. Sherlock Holmes had adventures and that's what matters."

An hour-long pilot episode, also featuring Rupert Graves as Inspector Lestrade, will be aired in the autumn (2009) on BBC One and a full series will follow if it proves popular with viewers.

Piers Wenger, Head of Drama at BBC Wales said: "Our Sherlock is a dynamic superhero in a modern world, an arrogant genius sleuth driven by a desire to prove himself cleverer than the perpetrator and the police - everyone in fact."

SCUTTLEBUT FROM THE SPERMACETI PRESS

The mere fact that you are a reader of the *Communication* (the official journal of the Pleasant Places of Florida) indicates that you have an interest in Sherlock Holmes that transcends the 56 short stories and four novels that comprise the official Canon. Maybe you want to keep up with the latest pastiches or a new biography of the Literary Agent, Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle. I will attempt to discuss in a series of articles the various other aspects of Sherlockian that come to mind.

I will start with the very best way to keep up to date on Sherlockian activities - Peter Blau's *Scuttlebut from the Spermaceiti Press*. This is an excellent monthly newsletter that attempts, and usually succeeds very well, in



documenting the latest currents in Sherlockian activities. Do you want to know about Sherlockian movies or DVDs available, new annotated versions of the stories, pastiches, meetings, the Baker Street Irregulars, comic (cont. on page 3) (cont. from page 2) books, or any other aspect that you fancy? You can keep current with a subscription for only \$10.70 a year. To subscribe, send a check for \$10.70



Who is that short scruffy guy conferring with Dr. Watson? Holmes, you say? Man! Did Watson describe the great detective in a manner to ensure his anonymity?

An Honorable Soldier

Type of material: Pamphlet Publisher: C u r i o u s Tiger Press Pages:18 Year: 2006 Author: J e r r y Kegley, BSI

This is a short, informal biography of Colonel Sebastian Moran, "the second most dangerous man in London," according to Sherlock Holmes. It summarizes his early life and education and gives some background about his father's career, which included participation in the century-long affray called "The Great Game" by Kipling. There is a

brief analysis of the data (false) presented by Watson on his Regiment and early military service as well as a fairly detailed summary of that service.

A good deal of background material is included covering the 2nd Afghan War and the events that led up to it. In fact, much of this material is needed to explain Moran's distaste for Mycroft Holmes and his policies, which may well have led to that War. Moran's service during that campaign and his subsequent service in The Zulu War in South Africa are also covered in some detail. It was during this conflict that Moran made the acquaintance of Sir Harry Flashman and reference is made to several items from The Flashman Papers, as edited by George MacDonald Fraser.

Moran's participation in the Afghan campaigns of 1878 and 1879 are followed in some depth, especially as these efforts were the cause of his rapid withdrawal from India and his ultimate retirement from active military service. The later employment of Moran as Professor Moriarty's chief of staff and the reasons for that service are also covered, although less than thoroughly. His ultimate fate and the resolution of several problems with the narratives concerning him by Dr. Watson are covered in the final part of the biography.

In summary, this is an interesting supplement to The Canon; a good read and a plausible resolution of several Canonical mysteries. It is certainly worth reading and provides an illuminating look at one of the more mysterious characters in the Canon.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones; January, 2009.

Note: Copies of this pamphlet are available from the author. Send inquiries or a check for \$10.00 to: Jerry Kegley,

CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA

April 18 - Sherlockian Film Festival, Seminole Library, 9200 113th St. N. Seminole, Seminole Campus of SPC. 10:30 AM Contact The Unopened Newspaper at

April 18-19 - *Gathering of Southern Sherlockians*. Presentations by scions from Atlanta, Birmingham, Nashville and Greenville. Focus on *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Contact Kent Ross at

May 15-17 - *Sherlock Holmes/ACDoyle Symposium*, Dayton, OH

May/June TBA - *34th Annual Spring Gathering*, Sarasota TBA

October 14 - *Pre-BoucherconEvent: Doyle, Bouchercon, Fleming*. Must be an attendee of Convention (see next)

October 15-18 - *The 40th Bouchercon World Mystery Convention*, Indianapolis, IN. www.bouchercon2009.com

For the Record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, Master of the House,

(Master of

Ceremonies at most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

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

(Correspondent)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

(Communications and Bookkeeping)

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