



The Pleasant Places of Florida



49.

(Suggested in "The Five Orange Pips")

A Corresponding Scion **Society** of the BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

12th Night Reflections

....Our Holmesian Workshop was a great success! What a treat to have John Shaw, Ron de Waal, and Peter Blau with us here in the "Pleasant Places". Special kudos to our own Caroline Everett for arranging the superb displays.... The next **P.P. of F.** get-together is scheduled for 7:30pm, Mon., March 10th at the Carrolls. This will be the inaugural of the Diogenes Club - a mind-jogging adventure into Sherlockiana. Please let Mike Carroll know if you're coming..... Our latest PPoff Round-Robin Pastiche has been purloined by Moriarty. Can it be restored?.....The 5th Annual Gathering at HOLMES Beach (HQ) is scheduled for Sat., APRIL 19th - Mark your calendar now!..... The usual plethora of correspondance has been received since #48 - thanks to you all. Rock Gray, of N.Kingstown, RI, sent in a fabulous article, "Strange Adv.of the Cornish Horrors" from Providence Sunday Journal(12/9/79)....Rec'd another great article:"Sherlockian Fever Strikes ONGers" featuring Staff Davis, of the Afghanistan Perceivers, Tulsa.(Copy for 3 15¢ stamps, please)... Also rec'd "more baker street ballads" edited by Edw.Lauterbach...Ron Jordan sent on a copy of the 1st Annual Silver Blaze Memorial held last August at Essex Jct., Vermont... The recent Yankee Magazine carried a colorful article on the Niver's home in Hartford - very Victorian!...Andy Peck's Commonplace Book, Vol.2 #4 is off the presses.... Bill Hoerr sent some actual entries which appeared in the Times agony column. Also rec'd Vol.7, No.1 HOLMESWORK, Journal of the Master's Class - Editor, Norman Winokur - excellent!.... Jim Duval puts out the "Quarterly \$tatement", a fine publication of Scion, Cox & Co.Another fine Scion publication rec'd - "The Sherlockian Meddler" Vol.III No.3 from The Non-Canonical Calabashes of LA... "The Honker" has a feature "Mrs. Hudson's Corner" with recipes, et al. (Copycats!).... A recent visitor to HOLMES Beach was Tom Cook, of Muncie, Indiana....Other PPoff news - Bill Ward is now the Official Archivist for the Pleasant Places. Please continue to send items to Recorder, but eventually they will be filed and cataloged in St. Pete with Bill. He is also the Librarian. You may secure a List of books in the PPoff Library from him

.... This Recorder would be remiss if if he did not relate, at least in brief, **the** adventure of his "baptism" at the B.S.I. Dinner in New York City, January 11th past. For me it was a sheer delight to be tabled with Dr. Julian Wolff, BSI Commisionaire, and share in the celebration of his 75th Birthday. It was a pleasure to meet in person so many I have known only thru correspondance. Also honored to meet Isaac Asi-

(Cont. Page 2)

Come, come, Watson, it's as plain as a dikestaff!
The place to be is the Carroll's
N. St. Pete, 7:30pm, Monday, MARCH 10, for the
first gathering of the "Diogenes Club".



Holmes Beach



Communication #49.

FEBRUARY 20, 1980*

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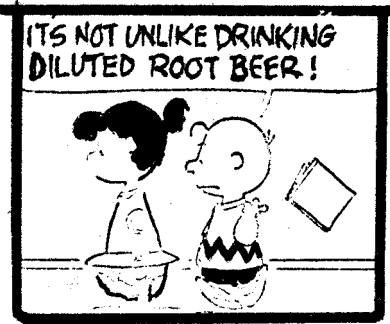
A Corresponding Scion Society of

THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

Please direct correspondence to:
The Rev. Dr. Benton Wood, BSI, Recorder

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(*- Note: Ash Wednesday. On this day in 1877, Holmes published his erudite monograph: "Upon the Distinction Among Ashes of 140 Various Tobaccos."

12th NIGHT (Cont from p.1)
mov, the great Limerist, Nicholas Meyer, author of 7% & West-End, & Will Oursler. All in all - a super time for "SCAN"....



Quotes and unquotes

The new *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* came out this year, with some 40 percent new material compared to the previous (1953) edition. The editors admit that their biggest problem is tracking down famous phrases that were never really said by anyone famous. Examples: Nowhere is it said in the Bible, "The lion shall lie down with the lamb." It's really the wolf who dwells with the lamb. Nor did Humphrey Bogart say "Play it again, Sam" in *Casablanca*. He said, "If she can stand it, I can. Play it." And famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes never said, "Elementary, my dear Watson" in any of Arthur Conan Doyle's stories.

From Mrs. Hudson's Kitchen

(Readers are requested to submit their Sherlockian recipes for this column.)



P. P. of F. CALAMONDIN MARMALADE (Excellent for High Tea.)

4 c. firm fruit, free of blemishes. Wash. Cut in 1/2. Remove pips. Squeeze juice, then slice thinly or put thru food chopper. Measure fruit. Place in saucepan.

For each cup of fruit add 3c water. Bring to a boil. Cook 15 min. May let stand overnight or cook into marmalade immediately.

For marmalade, measure 3 c. stock into large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Add 3 c. sugar. Stir to dissolve sugar. Cook rapidly to 220°F on candy or jelly thermometer. Remove from heat and let cool to 190°F. Pour into clean jars & cap with self-sealing lids.

(Submitted by Joan Wood, PPOFF)

Doc Watson will benefit the Special Olympics

Agony Column

(Readers are asked to submit items for this Column. Thank you.)



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By JOHN PIESEN

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24. Sherlock Holmes

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Sherlock Holmes' Secret Passion: Retrograde Analysis

Scholars have failed to uncover any hard evidence that Sherlock Holmes played chess. Yet it is difficult to believe that the great sleuth could have been unfamiliar with a game that would have so challenged his fabled powers of deduction.

Several clues scattered throughout his tales indicate that the resident of 221B Baker Street was in fact a chess player. In *The Adventure of the Illustrious Client*, he proclaims: "I must plan some fresh opening move, for this gambit won't work." And in describing a suspect in *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman*, he remarks: "Amberley excelled at chess—one mark, Watson, of a scheming mind."

A dim view of the game indeed. No matter. Chess buffs continue to claim Holmes as one of their own, and every so often a new piece of chess fiction casts him at a chessboard. In a recent article, "The Hoax of His Career" (*The Chess Atlas*, July 1979), Thomas Hailey maintains that the master of disguise assumed the alias Harry Nelson Pillsbury—the unknown but sensational 22-year-old genius who clobbered the world's leading masters in his debut at the Hastings tournament of 1895, and who later set a world record by playing 22 blindfold games simultaneously.

Thus, between 1891 and 1894, after

Holmes was presumed to have perished in a plunge over the Reichenbach Falls, the detective did not become a patient of Dr. Freud, as that silly novel and film *The Seven Per Cent Solution* would have us believe. Of course not. He was busy studying chess, preparing for Hastings. There can scarcely be any doubt about it. For did not Pillsbury have a prodigious memory, a prominent nose, hol-



Sherlock Holmes

Harry Nelson Pillsbury

lowed cheekbones, and piercing eyes? (See illustration.) But alas, theorizes Mr. Hailey, chess was not enough for Holmes' analytical mind; and so in 1906, having wearied of the game, "he killed off Pillsbury with a fake death and eventually retired from the detection arena to bee-raising in Sussex."

Still more light has been shed on the famed detective's chess habits by a recently discovered manuscript buried in

Dr. Watson's papers. In *The Chess Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), Raymond Smullyan reveals that, along with the violin and cocaine, Holmes harbored a secret passion for chess problems in retrograde analysis. And why not? In *The Sign of the Four* the master himself says, "Give me problems!" We now know he meant chess problems.

Retrograde Analysis

Unlike conventional chess puzzles, retrograde analysis problems are "studies in pure deductive reasoning" that "might be said to lie on the borderline between logic and chess," observes Mr. Smullyan. Problem C below, his manuscript tells us, was composed by Holmes' archnemesis, the evil genius Professor Moriarty. Neither the white king nor queen has moved during the last five moves, nor has any piece been captured during that time. What was the last move? (Note that you are not told whose move it is; but you do know that every move made in the game was legal.) Had Holmes failed to solve this problem, he would have fallen prey to a diabolical scheme of Moriarty's and lost his life even before he met Dr. Watson.

Grandmaster Evans, a three-time national champion and member of eight U.S. Olympic teams, is a noted author and chess columnist. He was Bobby Fischer's tutor in preparation for the 1972 title match.

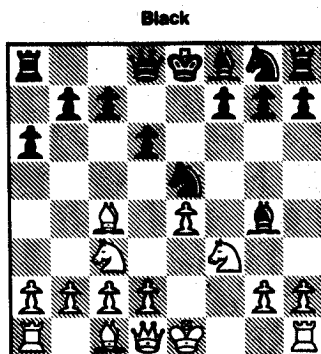
PROBLEMS

Answer Drawer, page 72

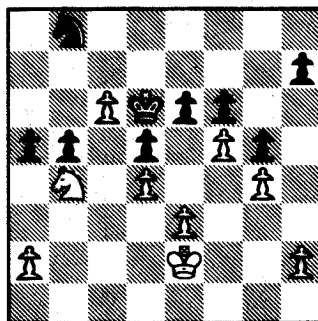
EASY: Pillsbury—Fernandez, Havana 1900

MEDIUM: Pillsbury—Gunsberg, Hastings 1895

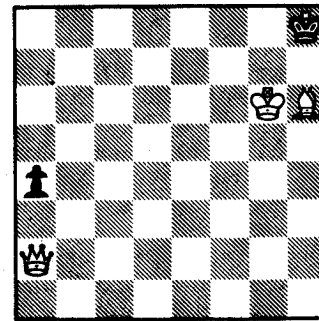
HARD: Composed by "Prof. Moriarty"



White to play and win.



White to play and win.



See text for explanation.

Whimsicality Marks 'Holmes Thing'

ROBIN MITCHELL (St. Pete Evening
Beach Bureau Chief Independent 1/24/80)

John Bennett Shaw chose his words carefully, to be sure the pace was right: "Funny," he began, searching for a description of his colleagues, "friendly, crazy, whimsical."

And so they are, these devotees of The Master, the great detective — Sherlock Holmes. A little bit of everything.

Thirty-six followers of the creation of author Arthur Conan Doyle gathered from around the nation last weekend for a three-day Sherlock Holmes workshop at St. Petersburg Beach's Colonial Gateway Inn.

This is the ninth workshop conducted by Shaw, tucked between lecturing in 30 states and three foreign countries. A Holmes enthusiast since he was 10, Shaw has a 12,000-item collection of "Holmesiana."

This Side Of The Bridge



Those attending the local workshop came to hear lectures on "Holmes in Arts, Crafts and Advertising," to see films, to follow a panel discussion on collecting "Holmesiana," to chortle over fellow Sherlockian efforts at duplicating Doyle's detective writings, to quaff a beer while singing *Put on Your Old Deerstalker* or *Yes, Sir, That's My Sherlock!* and to exchange common ground.

What brings them together?

"That would take two quarts of beer and two years to tell you," Shaw laughed, but he boiled "The Holmes Thing," as he calls it, to "Serious Whimsicality."

"You play it like a cricket game at Lord's (England's most prestigious cricket field), he says. "In other words, it's sport but it's serious."

The serious side was evident in the scholarly tone of papers presented during the seminars. There was a talk on an Afghan battle in which Watson was wounded, and a quiz on required readings. The sport, and there was much of that, surely came out in the array of Holmes-inspired T-shirts, buttons, displays and collections.

The detective was everywhere this weekend, from the "221 B" sign on the outside of the motel's meeting room door (Holmes' and companion-chronicler Dr. John Watson's London Baker Street address) to the marquee in that room that read "Everything Sherlockian Under The Sun."

There were tooled leather Holmes goods and embroidered items, record albums, rare old books, prints, canes, maps and miniature reproductions of Holmes' and Watson's apartment. Everyone, it seemed, came equipped with a dual-billed deerstalker hat made famous to the uninitiated through droves of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce movies.

"We find the interest broadening," says the workshop originator and leader of the local Holmes group, Rev. Dr. Benton Wood, who lives in Holmes Beach. The local scion, or offshoot of the parent Baker Street Irregulars group, is a chamber of commerce publicist's dream: The Pleasant Places of Florida.

People in these groups are broad, too. There are, says Shaw, "the so-called learned professions — medicine, the law, academia, the Fourth Estate" whose attraction to a world they know only from books is, well . . .

"Various things attract," he adds. "Escape, nostalgia, heroism . . . the heroism, I think, is one thing. If you really look around, the political heroes are tarnished, the sports heroes are like Reggie Jackson, who does it for money."

"Of all things," Shaw laughs, "there's a survey showing that a majority of high school girls would like to have Farrah Fawcett-Majors for their mother." A forbidding thought.

"And there is a need in most people for stories, storytellers to sit around fires and tell tales," he adds. "Doyle was a great storyteller. We don't have very many modern ones."

The real reason, though?

"I think I'm stuck in the 1890s myself," Shaw admits, in ferreting a secret within all the participants. "I love the period. The Victorian age of Holmes and Doyle and Watson was safe and secure and law was law, but . . . for the majority of the people, it was hell on Earth, a bad time to live, bad education, slum conditions. But to read about it was fun, a lovely era . . . the gaslight era."





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You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.



Conceived by
Ben Rader
Drawn by
Tom Stetak

