**The Norbury Chronicle**

**newsletter of the Holmesian Studies SIG of American Mensa**

**since '88, Baker Street Irregulars scion since '95**

"Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed." (Mark 4:22)

Issue XXI

Letters

From S. lee Wilson we have:

I recently bought and enjoyed *The Original Illustrated 'Strand' Sherlock Holmes: Complete Facsimile Edition* just the way it was printed in the *Strand* Magazine. You'll love it. (Wordsworth Editions, printed in Great Britain, ISBN 1-85326-896-8) about $10.00 at any bookstore.

Has anybody read any non-Doyle Sherlock Holmes stories that were any good? I don't want to be critical, but most of this new stuff is below standard of what Holmes' stories should be. (My opinion. Your opinion?)

[We agree-- most Holmes stories are unworthy of the Master. We advice checking to see if the work in question has the approval of Dame Jean Conan Doyle, the copyright holder. You can't judge a book by its cover blurbs.

Books, etc.

On the new Holmesian books we come across, their quality varies. Larry Millet's *Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Red Demon* are supposedly "from the American chronicles of John H. Watson, M. D.", though surprisingly taking place in Minnesota in 1896 and 1894 respectively. The first (chronologically) involved a murderous arson, the second the disappearance just before his wedding of wealthey Jonathan Upton.

*The Sherlock Holmes Puzzle Book* by Ruth Lake Tepper is more than just a crossword puzzle book based on the Canon. Condensed versions of SCAN, REDH, IDEN, TWIS, SPEC, ENGR, NOBL, BERL, SILV, STOC, REIG, CROO, NAVA, EMPT, NORW, BLAC, SIXN, 3STU, GOLD, MISS, ABBE are given as well as "The Case of George Edalji". So it's part logic puzzlebook too ... or, for those (many?) of you who have read (and re-read) the stories already, a quizbook. The answers to the logic puzzles are confirmed by solving the crossword puzzles.

[A free issue of the *Chronicle* to the first to send in the most correct answers to the following:

1. How did Irene outwit Holmes?

2. Where did Holmes take Dr. Watson, Peter Jones and Mr. Merryweather?

3. What was the purpose of the Red-headed League?

4. What was the solution to the disappearance of Hosmer Angel?

5. What two clues helped Holmes solve the mystery of "the Man with the Twisted Lip"?

6. How did Dr. Roylott kill his stepdaughter Julia?

7. What clue lead Holmes to Col. Lysander Stark?

8.as Stark doing with a hydraulic press?

9. How did Holmes know Lady St. Simon had not disappeared?

10. Who stole the Blue Coronet?

11. Who broke it?

12. Who killed John Stracker and how?

13. Why did Pinner want Pycroft's note and stop his resignation from Mawson's?

14. Who was his accomplice and what were they after?

15. Who killed William, Justice Cunningham's coachman?

16. Who was the David Mrs. Barclay referred to?

17. Why did Col. Moran kill Ronald Adair?

18. How did John McFarlane's bloody thumbprint on the wall?

19. How did Holmes know Neligan was innocent?

20. What clues led to Mrs. Coram?

There's also a "Did You Know That ...?" section with such info (trivia?) as:

Sherlock Holmes and Watson are the two most famous characters in all English literature. The Sherlocks of Sherlockstown were neighbors to the Doyles. Holmes never said, "Elementary, my dear Watson." in any of the stories. Holmes wore a deerstalker cap first in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* illustrations by Sidney Page. A dinner meeting with an agent of *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1888 inspired *Sign of the Four* -- and also *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde.

Here's an excerpt from the Baker Street Irregulars' crossword puzzle attributed to Mycroft Holmes:

ACROSS

15. What Watson recognized when he put his hand in Bartholomew Sholto's leg

20. pet over which Dr. Grimesby Roylott hurled the blacksmith

22. kind of Pedro whence came the tiger

27. perhaps a measure of Holmes' chemicals

29.

DOWN

12. 1 or 5 sent "S. H. for J. O."

16. To save the dying detective trouble, Mr. Culverton Smith was kind enough to turn this up

17. blundering constable who failed to gain his sergeant's stripes in the Lauriston Gardens mystery

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **12A** |  |  |  |
| **15A** |  | **16A** |  | **17A** |
| **A** | **20** |  |  |  |
|  |  | **22A** | **27A** | **a** |
|  |  | **A** | **29** |  |

We've also gotten the fascinating book, *The Einstein Paradox and Other Science Mysteries Solved* by Sherlock Holmes by Colin Bruce. Perhaps a reader without a life-ling interest in both modern physics and Sherlock Holmes wouldn't appreciate it as much as we did, but someone who has an interesting either likely would learn to appreciate the other a bit more.

"The Case of the Scientific Aristocrat", namely Lord Forleigh, involves his temporarily mysterious death in his Universal Planetarium.

Several cases also involve Prof. Edward George Challenger. In "The Case of the Missing Energy" he solves the mysterious deaths of two crew members of the Matildsa Briggs (based on the actual incident in the 1960's).

"Three Cases of Relative Jealousy" has an armchair-type case involving the rightful succession to the throne of Crolgaria [Cro(atia + Bu)lgaria?] and so that involves brother Mycroft, the case of Lord Uxbridge's murder not by a burglar and the rivalry between professors Challenger and Sumerlee as well as Einstein's Twin and Train Paradoxes.

They show up again -- still, of course, at odds -- in the investigation of a death reminiscent of that in LION in "The Case of the Deserted Beach": -- and the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen Paradox. In :"The Case of the Pre-Atomic Doctor" Dr. Watson gives a good refutation of homeopathy and in "The Case of the Sabotaged Scientist" he avoids the fate of the British Museum cat, death from the Dangerfield expedition's cursed idol, destroyed in "The Case of the Energetic Anarchist" -- along with Devil's Point, Canvey Island! In "The Case of the Faster Businessman" Watson's unable to prevent what amounts to the suicide of Barnum Rolleman.

"The Case of the Flying Bullets" involves three Cambridge students -- one murdered, one other with an apparently unbreakable alibi -- and relativity.

"The Case of the Disloyal Servant" refers to Jenkins the stableman's death with the queen and king of Molstein as witnesses -- apparently contradicted by the Archbishop of York and Sir Oswald Launton [a chess reference, fairy chess actually, since an archbishop is an edge-reflecting bishop] and incidentally the *Alicia* mystery.

"The Strange Case of Mrs. Hudson's Cat", Henrietta, involves disappearing tomcats, a lottery swindle, communications faster than light and the quantum zero effect.

"The Case of Lost Worlds" tragically involves the death of Arthur Pemberton, a student at the Institute of Educational Application, apparently driven mad by gambling addiction and the many-worlds hypothesis. It concludes with an alleged communication from a parallel world, the single word: "Norbury." How about that?

We haven't yet gotten up the courage to read *The Moor* by Laurie R. King. Emily Melton's review called it "dazzling" and claimed it "would please Doyle". Marilyn Stasio wrote readers have a "choice of being amused or affronted by these artful embellishments on the Holmes canon", that's embellishments like Holmes' marriage in his old age to the clever, young Mary Russel. Could anyone help us here? What is the majority opinion -- is it amusement or an affront?

The Mysterious Bookshop (129 W. 156th St., New York, NY 10019)'s Sherlock Holmes catalog A-J lists 551 items. (The have *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* for $15.50 plus $5.50 postage, a bit more than $20.) For $250 you could get *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* by John Murray (London, 1954 first edition, very good condition). For $200 there's available a full-color postcard of a scene from Gillette's play "Sherlock Holmes" with Holmes pointing a gun a Moriarty, for $150 a postcard of William Gillette on stage as Holmes, signed and dated 1905, for $125 a tinted postcard of Gillette in a Sherlockian dressing gown with pipe.

At the other end of the price scale there's: *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (New York: Dover, 1994) $1.00, *The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes* pamphlets for $1.50 to $2.00 each, *The Cases of Sherlock Holmes* comic book by Dan and David Day, $2.00. *Detection by Gaslight* paperback by Greenberg, etal., $2.00.

At $2.95 we got Vol. 1, No.1 of Mar. 1999 *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* by Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill (America's Best Comics, 7910 Ivanhoe St. #438, La Jolla, CA 92037). The cover is an intriguing part of the Victorian tabloid-like "picture paper" featuring: "Egyptians beset by monstrous occurrence", "Lady 'with past' kept peculiar company", "An affront to womanhood in foreign parts", "Opium -- a heathen curse on Christendom", "Strange mystery of the Hindu mariner" and "Ghastly murderer strikes Paris fleshpots".

The League of the title begins its tale in June 1898 and includes Campion Bond who works for "Mr. M." (Mycroft Holmes), Allan Quartermass, addicted to opium, Capt. Nemo, the unretired Auguste Dupin, Edward Hyde (fka Dr. Henry Jekyll) and presumably also the Invisible Man and Wilhelmia Murray -- more than one not so gentle or manly, though all extraordinary.

It also includes the beginning of a Quartermass story wherein he's seeking the drug taduki. The period ads though were perhaps the best feature, particularly:

Crimes Detected! Mysteries Solved!

Promising young private investigator, IN THE TRADITION OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, Baker Street area, seeks to fill gap left by untimely death of previous incumbent. Has own bumbling assisant, plus housekeeper with endearing working-class mannerisms. Will consider adopting violin and/or cocaine addiction, as required. Contact S. Blake, P. O. Box 221B, London