



# INEFFABLE TWADDLE



"It is my business to know what other people don't know."

—The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

Volume 41, Issue 1 • January 2022

The monthly publication of  
The Sound of the Baskervilles  
A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars since March 31, 1980  
Serving the Greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, USA



## ☺ HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Here's what we have in store for you in 2022! As requested by Webmaster Shannon, here's what our calendar should look like in **2022**:

- This current 5-year cycle began in March 2017 (with "Gloria Scott"), and we're still going by "date of occurrence" —as against "date of publication."

- Barring any changes to our meeting agendas (with non-Canonical meetings and/or non-story programs or speakers), we should study up on these stories in this order.

- January, 2022:** The Dancing Men
- February "** : Charles Augustus Milverton
- March "** : The Retired Colourman
- April "** : The Six Napoleons
- May "** : The Priory School
- June "** : Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax
- July "** : Thor Bridge
- August "** : Shoscombe Old Place
- September "** : The Three Garridebs
- October "** : The Three Gables
- November "** : The Illustrious Client
- December "** : The Blue Carbuncle

☺ **Special Guest at our January Meeting!!** In addition to our quizzing and discussion on DANC, our January 16 zoom meeting will begin with a talk by our special guest,



**Sherlockian extraordinary & honorary SOB Roger Johnson!!** He tickles our interest with this very expressive slide. And, if you don't recognize Roger from frequent ↗

SOB zoom meetings this year, here's a shot of Roger from 2015, with the Tony Howlett Award he received from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London! *The Tony Howlett Award is made each year for long and outstanding service to the London Society.*



☺ **SOB PFL David e-blasted this link on December 22...Thanks to SOB Bill Seil** we know that the long silent chimes of Big Ben and the other bells will once again be heard! It will chime in the New Year. I wonder if the BBC will broadcast that? Please have a safe holiday season and a very Happy New Year. <https://www.euronews.com/2021/12/23/london-s-big-ben-fully-visible-again-to-ring-in-the-new-year>

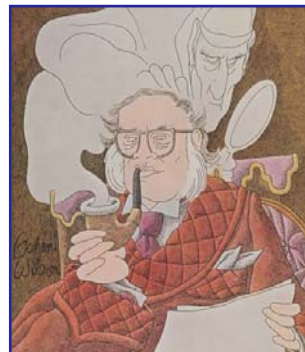
☺ **Passed on to us by the Dallas scion's President Steve Mason, BSI last January...**a limerick by Isaac Asimov presented by **SOB Ron Lies**, which Steve described as "appropriate during the week of Sherlock Holmes' birthday, and the finish of the BSI Weekend."

## A Study in Scarlet

Meet the quick minds as it restlessly combs  
as the smallest of clues as it roams

From Initial confusion  
To triumphant conclusion.  
My friends here we have  
Sherlock Holmes.

—Isaac Asimov,  
BSI



Continued on Page 3

## ★ Zoom Meeting ★ Sunday, January 16, 2022

**12:00 (Noon) to 12:30 p.m. Pacific time**

**Social Time!!**

**12:30 p.m. Pacific time—Structured meeting  
with discussion & quizzing on “DANC”**

### Says Program Chair Sunny,

In “*The Adventure of the Dancing Men*,” Sherlock Holmes immediately recognizes the “childish drawing” as an encoded message.

In Victorian times, cyphers relied on substitution methods and, given sufficient sample size, could be decoded by analyzing the frequency with which certain letters occur in vocabulary in comparison with the encrypted sample.



However, some substitution schemes could be quite complex, using multiple sets of letters in substitution. These poly-alphabetic substitution schemes could even be selected to intentionally flatten the frequency “fingerprint” in a vocabulary, making frequency analysis useless, and near-impossible to decode.

Fortunately for Holmes, Slaney was using a simple substitution. Unfortunately for our simple Norfolk squire, that sufficient sample size was too late in coming.

**Ed. Note:** *See more on cyphers on Page 4!*

## “Dancing” Quiz with Holmes & Watson

**By: SOB Charlie Cook**

1. How did Watson describe Holmes as the detective spent several hours on a chemical experiment?
2. What investment did Holmes deduce Watson would not make and what did he require the doctor do before revealing his methods?
3. Name the only man with whom Watson played billiards!
4. Name the man seeking Holmes’ help in deciphering the pictures of the dancing men!
5. What did the client’s wife do upon seeing the figures of the dancing men?
6. What three words did Watson say made a household word the length and breadth of England?
7. Name the local policeman eager to work with Holmes as he investigated the tragedy at his client’s home!

8. Two women raised the alarm at the client’s home; name them and their positions.
9. Holmes wondered if there was an inn of what name in the client’s neighborhood?
10. Name the man who was staying at the farm with the name which interested Holmes!
11. How many ciphers had Holmes analyzed in his monograph on the subject?
12. Name Holmes’ contact with the New York Police Bureau!

Answers may be found on Page 7



### SOB Kris Hambrick’s *Sherlock on Screen:*

### The Adventure of the Dancing Men

This has always been among my favorite episodes amongst the Granada offerings, and I am not alone. And yet, when you think about the actual plot, it’s tempting to wonder why. Most of the story happens in Holmes’ sitting room before he finally goes down to the country—only to realize he’s come too late. It should feel uneven, with the main protagonist unable to return, Abe Slaney showing up late in the proceedings, and Holmes not even leaving the house until almost halfway through. And yet, it’s highly regarded, both in original story form and in this early series adaptation.

One of the things that this particular script demonstrates is the way film can be used to fill in the pieces we usually only hear second-hand. On screen, we don’t merely hear Cubitt’s report that his wife is honorable, that they have a good relationship, that she is terrified. We don’t merely have his report that he is terrified. Despite Holmes remaining at his blackboard, we get to see husband and wife interact. We get to see the figures appear on various surfaces at home. We get to feel Cubitt’s terror as the figures dance across his sleepless consciousness. All of this is effective enough that one doesn’t really notice Holmes hasn’t actually done very much.

I think that is what marks a good adaptation. It’s not merely lifting words from the page verbatim, though of course with dialogue it can be. It’s about determining how to use the medium to the advantage of the story you’re telling, and I think this is an excellent example of one that doesn’t alter the text while filling out our experience of it in a way that serves to heighten both suspense and emotion. ...

Continued on Page 7





... Continued from Page 1  
 ☺ Professional reviewers gave Benedict Cumberbatch's new Western great reviews, but...SOB's Geoff Jeffery & Cara Cross streamed "The Power of the Dog" recently and had to shut it off after

only 30-minutes, with thumbs down! Adds PFL David: The 2022 Golden Globe Nominations: Best Actor in a Motion Picture—Drama is Benedict Cumberbatch, for "The Power of the Dog." Did they do a remake of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" that I didn't hear about??

☺ On a lighter note, SOB Jamila Robinson shared this: Year-end always brings "Lists!" Here's a new one: "Best Actors Who Played Sherlock Holmes, Ranked" (by Timea Betáková, published December 29, 2021) at: <https://movieweb.com/sherlock-holmes-actors-played-best/> "The most famous fictional detective has a lot of interpretations to his name. Here are 6 of the best actors who played Sherlock Holmes." Hint: Downey Jr. was ranked #4; Cumberbatch, #2; and Brett, #1!

☺ Further to Charlie Cook's "Notes" regarding "A Sherlock Carol," appearing last month (December 2021 *Ineffable Twaddle*, Vol. 40, Issue 12, Page 8), SOB Al Nelson, BME provides the New York Times review of the play shown at right → If you miss it this year, perhaps next year will work!!

☺ Remember: Raise a glass to Sherlock's 168<sup>th</sup> on January 6!

☺ PFL David e-blasted this on January 1, 2022: In the latest issue of his monthly "Scuttlebutt" newsletter, Peter Blau noted that the following zoom gathering will occur on **January 12**. As it will happen *before* our next meeting, I wanted to give you a chance to see it live. Thank you, Peter!

"Former prosecutor Stephen Lee will deliver a webinar on "Sherlock Holmes and the Art of Evidence" on Jan. 12 at 12:00 pm CST for the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association; it's free, and there's a registration button at [www.fedbarchicago.org/event/sherlock-holmes-2022](http://www.fedbarchicago.org/event/sherlock-holmes-2022).

☺ SOB Sunshine Chair Pat McIntosh sent this on Christmas: I got a T-shirt catalog in the mail...called, I believe, "Catalog favorites." I read off to Jim so many funny messages (though I don't remember them, now). One was, "If you can't find the sunshine, be the sunshine." Jim suggested I get that since I'm the Club's sunshine chair, so I did. It took a long time to get it, but understand the ripple effects of COVID, supply chain problems, shipping problems, etc. I had it on for the December meeting. IF the COVID ever goes away, I can wear it again to in-person meetings—if ever!



Drew McVety, left, as Sherlock Holmes, and Thom Sesma as Ebenezer Scrooge.

## The Game Is Afoot, Elementary and Merry

Mashing up Holmes and Scrooge in a clever comedy that's also a murder mystery.

IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS since the grim tussle on the cliff above Reichenbach Falls, where the criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty plunged to his death.

But for Sherlock Holmes, the demise of his nemesis has proved unmooring. In London, lawlessness continues apace, yet the great detective has given up the fight. Adrift in ennui, he no longer bothers to ensnare the city's evildoers. His faithful Dr. Watson, eager to get the band back together, can't even entice Holmes to come to his house for Christmas.

"There is no greater fool than one who shouts 'Happy Christmas!' in a city throughout which the foulest of mankind lurks 'round every corner," Holmes growls. "I'll thank you to leave me alone, Watson."

Bit of a Grinch, isn't he. Bit of a Scrooge, even. In "A Sherlock Carol," Mark Shanahan's arch charmer of a holiday mash-up, Holmes — not Dickens's Scrooge — is the one who is "solitary as an oyster."

At New World Stages, Shanahan directs a cast of six, wonderfully led by the Broadway veterans Drew McVety as Holmes and Thom Sesma as Scrooge. Remixing Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens, this is a clever, crowd-pleasing holiday comedy that happens also to be a murder mystery.

It isn't aiming for sumptuous elegance, like Matthew Warchus's large-cast, high-design production of Jack Thorne's "A Christmas Carol," seen two seasons ago on Broadway. This is a simpler, streamlined affair looking for — and, crucially, finding — silly, festive fun.

On Christmas Eve 1894, the grumpish Holmes is haunted by a spirit: Moriarty,

whose presence he feels stalking him everywhere.

And the beatific, reformed Scrooge? Found dead that very day by a doctor who believes there was foul play. A fan of Watson's stories, the doctor entreats Holmes to investigate — and is thrilled when the uncannily observant detective, while refusing his appeal, says he's known everything about him since the moment he walked in.

Partisans of "A Christmas Carol" get a sweet thrill as well when Holmes, too arrogant to resist, gives a quick rundown of his



**A Sherlock Carol**  
 Through Jan. 2 at New World Stages,  
 Manhattan; 212-239-6200,  
[asherlockcarol.com](http://asherlockcarol.com). Running time:  
 1 hour 45 minutes.

intel on this stranger: He was poor in early childhood, illness shadowed his first years of life, the dead man was his benefactor. In an instant, we recognize the doctor — Tiny Tim, all grown up and doing well.

After he tells Holmes that a famous diamond had been on its way to Scrooge, who recently received a death threat, the detective relents and takes the case.

"The game is afoot," he says, suddenly saucy, tossing one end of his scarf around a shoulder.

And off we go into a sprightly escape of a play with a fine, much-doubling ensemble and a design team trailing reams of Broadway credits: Anna Louizos, set; Linda Cho, costumes; Rui Rita, lighting; John Gromada, music and sound; Charles G. La-Pointe, hair and wigs. This production is in very good hands, and so are we.

There is a curious shortage lately of plays to make us laugh, let alone to tickle both children and adults. For admirers of Doyle and Dickens, here's one.

Far right: Cara C. & Geoff J.

Below left: Margaret & Allen Nelson

Below right: Jim & Pat McIntosh



## Secret Messages in the Canon

By: Liese Sherwood-Fabre

This essay first appeared in The Beacon Society's "Sherlock's Spotlight" for Autumn 2021, Volume 2, Number 4. Reprinted here with permission from the author and the editor.

In *The Valley of Fear* and "The Adventure of the Dancing Men," Sherlock Holmes must break a code to solve a case.

He tells Watson he's practiced his decoding skills by reading similar messages in the newspaper where people would send secret notes in private ads.



Sending and reading coded messages in the newspapers was a popular pastime in Victorian England. Public interest grew, in part, from Edgar Allan Poe's own study and use of ciphers, or secret writing. In his essay series "A Few Words on Secret Writing," Poe discussed the use of substitution codes, which he used in his short story "The Gold Bug" and challenged readers to submit messages for him to decipher.

Substitution codes involve using a line of 26 letters or symbols, like in "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" where the alphabet is written underneath, and the message is then rewritten using the new letters or symbols. For example, using the Latin phrase "*Sauviter in modo, fortiter in re*" ("Gentle in manner, firm in deed"), the new, coded alphabet (or "key") would be (as shown here):


"My name is Sherlock Holmes" would become  
*"dr osdi ii iritofum rfodii."*

Because some letters have the same coded symbol, the message is harder to decipher, but easy with the key...

S a u v I t e r I n m o d o f o r t I t e r I n r e  
 A b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Without the key, decoding a message requires identifying the most frequently used letters or symbols in the message and using them to guess which represent the



most frequent letters in English (such as the letter E). Using trial and error, the decoder guesses at the letters and message until it 

makes sense.

In 1841, Poe announced he had managed to crack all the messages received over a two-year period except two submitted by W.B. Tyler. One of these was not solved until 2000 (almost 160 years later) by a Canadian computer expert.

Computers and other machines made codes much more complex and more difficult to decipher. Perhaps the most famous was the Enigma machine developed by Germany during World War II. Today, messages can even be hidden in computer pictures.

Using the same substitution code key (as shown at left),

S a u v I t e r I n m o d o f o r t I t e r I n r e

A b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

can you decipher this famous Sherlock Holmes quote?

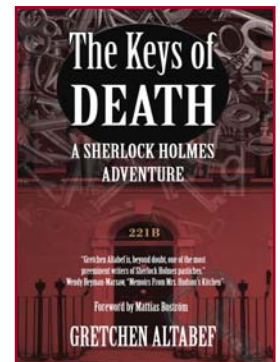
R F E M O F I D R D I T R F V I , I S T I F O

See Page 7 for solution

## Things to See, Buy, Do & Know...

⇒ From SOB PFL David:

- **THE KEYS OF DEATH** IS BAKER STREET BEDROCK. In Gretchen Altabef's 1880s-era novel, Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson and Mrs. Hudson begin something great in the world. Out of the fog three young souls unite in their common desire for justice. A genesis story about friendship with the power to change the world. Here, finally, Mrs. Hudson's part in it can be told. The cast includes Paris' gentleman thief Arsene Lupin, West African pirate Félix Calabar, London's spectacular beauty Lily Langtry, the Imperial Theatre Orchestra, and the Irregulars; and even the Prince of Wales has a part to play in Holmes' solution to the murder mystery.



- **ARTISTIC HOLMES:** If you are looking for a unique gift for yourself or any Sherlockian I suggest either **Etsy** or **Red Bubble**. Creative people come up with the great ideas, all you need to do is search the results.

- Displate is a **ONE-OF-A-KIND METAL POSTER** designed to capture your unique passions. They've created a 21<sup>st</sup> century canvas that's sturdy, magnet-mounted and durable enough to withstand a lifetime of intense staring, which is only half the fun! You can customize, collect, and rearrange them at will—it only takes seconds to set them up with no power tools, no damages, no frustrations. Go to: <https://displate.com> and search for "Sherlock."



# Stretching the Holidays with More on The Blue Carbuncle!

## Part 1: THE BLUE CARBUNCLE

A Poem By SOB Rich Krisciunas©

*As Presented to Cesspudlians of London, 12/12/20; Stormy Petrels, 3/2/21; Harpooners, 12/17/21 & The SOBs, 12/19/21*

The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle;  
a tale Sherlockians remember  
when the Christmas season rolls around  
near the end of every December.

It's about a jewel that was pilfered,  
and a poor plumber who stood accused,  
an abandoned goose and dropped felt hat  
that left Sherlock Holmes a bit confused.

'Twas just two days after Christmas passed when  
Watson went to see Holmes for a reason.  
He stopped by to visit his dear old friend  
to wish him "compliments of the season."

When he entered, Holmes was fast at work,  
as has oft been recorded in the *Strand*,  
lounging in his purple dressing-gown  
eyeing a hat with a lens in his hand.

Commissionaire Peterson had found the hat  
in the early morning on Christmas day.  
He saw a man, attacked by ruffians,  
who dropped a fat goose and ran away.

Tied to the leg of the bird was a clue;  
the ID of the goose's benefactor.  
"For Mrs. Henry Baker" read the card  
pointing to a potential malefactor.



Holmes quickly put forth astute deductions  
about the hat's owner and said, with flair,  
"the man's wife recently ceased loving him  
and he puts lime cream upon his hair."



## Part 2: DO GEESE HAVE CROPS?

An Essay By SOB Phillip Bergem, BSI

*Originally appeared in The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota's "Explorations," Winter 2021, Issue No. 82; reprinted with the author's permission.*

At the Study Group session this past December the story discussed was, appropriately enough, "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle." Somebody mentioned that a common complaint against the story is that geese do not have crops, as if that would preclude someone from shoving a diamond down a goose's throat. The person pointed out that geese do have gizzards and that it was very reasonable for a gemstone to be stored there.

Continued on Page 6

Then Peterson arrived with a precious stone,  
which Holmes smartly identified with surety;  
the Countess of Morcar's stolen blue carbuncle,  
by its dainty size, radiance and purity.

The *Times* report about the theft revealed  
plumber John Horner had been arrested.  
But Holmes was quick to voice his suspicion  
that the evidence was still untested.  
Holmes placed an ad in the local papers  
and, subsequently, Mr. Baker appeared.  
He was a large man with a massive head,  
a red nose and a pointed, grizzled beard.

Holmes tested Baker's culpability  
by asking questions about what he knew  
about the goose's feathers, legs and crop,  
confirming his conduct was pure and true.

From vendor to supplier he moved through the town,  
tracing the goose's history at a startling pace.  
Whereupon Holmes focused upon James Ryder  
and put an end to the surprising wild goose chase.

Ryder confessed his role; told them of his plight.  
How he fed a goose the stolen jewel that night.  
That the bird he'd chosen vanished from his sight  
causing him to take a goose that wasn't right.

It ended with Ryder on his knees,  
"Don't turn me in, I'm so, so contrite."  
Begging, pleading Sherlock, "pretty please."  
Please. Let me flee the country tonight.

The plot was hatched by Miss Catherine Cusack,  
a maid who we never got a chance to see.  
She was the Countess' lady in waiting  
who devised the sordid plan of treachery.

In the end, Holmes declared that it was time  
he thought, for England's law to do some bending  
and by letting Ryder go, Holmes guaranteed  
a Christmas story with a happy ending.

**Santa & Mrs. Claus  
visit the Haugens  
during The SOBs'  
December 19 Zoom  
Meeting!**



**The New Year  
visits SOBs Roger  
Johnson & Jean  
Upton with a  
vengeance!**

## Stretching the Holidays...

Continued from Page 5

### Part 2: DO GEESE HAVE CROPS?

I had wondered about this point for years but had never investigated it. Les Klinger does cover the matter in his *Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* (*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1998), appendix to BLUE, pages 178–179), mentioning some of the past commentary. With the discussion acting as a catalyst, I decided to dig further and present the facts for the readers.

The upper part of a bird's digestive tract consists of the alimentary canal (no "alimentary, my dear Watson" jokes, please), the proventriculus (also known as the glandular stomach), and the gizzard (the ventriculus or muscular stomach). Food enters the proventriculus where secretions, primarily hydrochloric acid and pepsinogen, start the digestive process. The food is passed along to the gizzard where the strong muscles grind the food, necessary because of the lack of teeth to chew food. Some birds will eat small stones or grit that settle in the gizzard where they assist with grinding the food. Food will pass back and forth between the ventriculus and the proventriculus several times before passing along to the rest of the digestive tract.

Some birds (e.g., chickens, turkeys, pigeons, budgerigars)—but not all—also have a crop. This is a thin walled expansion of the alimentary canal where food which is eaten quickly can be stored and released into the glandular stomach at a reasonable rate for digesting. The relative size of the crop varies among bird species.

Most of the literature and online resources state with certainty that geese do not have a crop. But, as with many areas of study in the Sherlockian world, it's not quite that simple. There are several reputable sources that do refer to a crop in geese. These include several sites that are managed by goose owners and a book on goose production (Buckland, Roger and Gérard Guy, *FAO Animal Production and Health Paper-154 (Goose Production)*, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations, 2002, Chapter 3 "Digestive Physiology", <http://www.fao.org/3/y4359e/y4359e05.htm>). It would appear that even among professionals, there is some uncertainty about the existence of the goose crop.

In the story, the crop of the goose is first mentioned by Commissionaire Peterson when he returned with the diamond, then by Holmes as he described the *disjecta membra* to Henry Baker, and finally by James Ryder as he described his actions. While a professional goose-seller such as Mr. Breckenridge might know that a goose does not have a crop, it is no surprise that three non-professionals in the world of poultry would get it wrong. (Watson is blameless since he simply reported what was told to him.) The lack of a true crop does not make a difference to the story. It would still be possible to push a diamond down the gullet of a goose where it would get into the proventriculus and likely settle into the gizzard, awaiting discovery during preparation for when the goose is cooked.



### Part 3: THE CHRISTMAS GOOSE

An Essay Poem By Margaret Nelson

When Sherlock Holmes made his bet with Breckenridge (BLUE) about whether Henry Baker's goose was city- or country-bred, he chose the side with the higher odds, even though he lost the bet. The December 2021 issue of "Landscape" magazine's article, "Revival of a Favourite for a Feast," discusses British Christmas geese and their trip from farm to London market.

Since Roman times, geese have been kept in England, grazing on common land or private farms and watched over by gooseherds. They are easy to care for, largely self-sufficient in the country and adult birds are fine in rain and frost. Their meat, eggs, down (for mattresses and pillows), quills for pens and fat were used too. Goose fat turns to liquid at 111° (what do they do in these hot-climate times?) and the cook needs to pierce the skin in several places to let the fat drain out during roasting. According to this article, goose fat was used to lubricate the cogs on windmills (found in east Britain), to remove tarnish on the kitchen spit and, when mixed with water and run through ashes to make soap, but its most culinary use is to rub on potatoes before roasting them, a delicious gourmet treat!

Geese hatched in the spring would be at their meat-peak at Christmas time though they were also harvested in other seasons. Geese were raised all over England but in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Leadenhall Market, in central London, received geese walked in from the country, coming from as far away as Essex, Lincolnshire, East Anglia and even Wales and Devon! Before their journey, the geese's feet were dipped in hot tar and then they were driven across sand and sawdust to make a sort of protective layer for the walk. Sounds inhumane, but this happened. The geese sometimes had a walk of 100 miles and walked at a rate of one mile per hour. They had to spend the night and towns, like Gosfield in Essex, were named... Continued on Page 7

## Sherlock on Screen: The Dancing Men

Continued from Page 2



In addition, this is one of those stories that allows us to see the bond not just between Holmes and Watson, but Brett and Burke. Several times, Burke gets little bits of business that you don't get to see in the written version: his sneaking a peak (and then falling asleep) at Holmes' mon-

ograph, his stepping forward to defend Holmes from the skepticism of the police, his eagerly imparting to Inspector Martin the strategy to deciphering a substitution code —and Holmes' little smirk as he lets him. The change of medium allows us to see not just the bits of the story previously only relayed second-hand, but to watch Holmes and Watson interact without the medium of Watson's writing, and to think about the story anew.



### Answers To Cook's DANC Quiz on Page 2:

1. Like a strange lank bird with dull gray plumage and a black topknot.
2. South African Securities; confess that he was utterly taken aback by Holmes' deduction.
3. Thurston.
4. Hilton Cubitt.
5. She dropped down in a dead faint.
6. Riding Thorp manor.
7. Inspector Martin.
8. Saunders, the housemaid; and Mrs. King, the cook.
9. Elrige.
10. Abe Slaney.
11. 60.
12. Wilson Hagreave.



## Stretching the Holidays...

Continued from Page 6

### Part 3: THE CHRISTMAS GOOSE

...for this overnighting, so getting a goose that was country bred would not be unusual in London.

The goose was a symbol of plenty at Christmas but Charles Dickens seemed to have altered this when he had Scrooge send a boy to buy the Cratchits a 'prize turkey.' Turkeys had been brought to Europe from the Americas by the Spanish and still cost a bit more than the goose. After *A Christmas Carol* appeared, the goose was seen as associated with poverty while the turkey took on "aspirational overtones," and people with room could raise geese in their city-yards or buy one through a goose-club. In any case, the bird would still be welcome as the centerpiece of a Christmas dinner.



## Book Reviews

Continued from Page 8

### Thackeray and Doyle?

...her relatives investigate.

Today the story is still entertaining and you might wonder if Doyle read Thackeray's works while waiting for patients to come into his office, and was inspired to use it as the basis for another Sherlock Holmes adventure?

Sheldon Goldfarb referred to this story in his online talk "Thematic Richness and the Sherlock Holmes Stories" as part of the December 10-11, 2021 Edinburgh Conan Doyle Network Conference: "Conan Doyle and Storytelling."

A recording of the conference will be added to the Edinburgh Conan Doyle Project website early in 2022 at <http://edinburgh-conan-dolye.org>.

## Secret Message in the Canon Decoded

Below is the solution to the Coded Message suggested on Page 4:



*Please welcome New Member,*

**TIM KLINE,**

*who attended a couple of our Zoom Meetings in 2021 and joined us in late December!*

*See you again soon, Tim!*

R	F	E	M	O	F	I	D	R	D	I	T	R	F	V	I	,	I	S	T	I	F	O
Y	O	U	K	N	O	W	M	Y	M	E	T	H	O	D	S	,	W	A	T	S	O	N





The Sound  
of the  
Baskervilles

By appointment  
of Her Majesty,  
Queen Victoria

## Ineffable Twaddle

The monthly publication of  
The Sound of the Baskervilles  
A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars since March 31, 1980  
Serving the Greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, USA

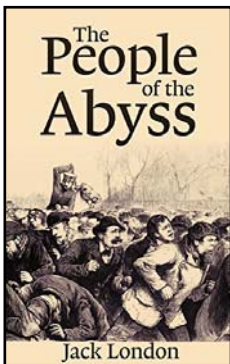
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## Book Reviews By: SOB Margaret Nelson

### "People of the Abyss" by Jack London

This non-fiction book was researched in 1902 and published in 1903, so is contemporary with some of ACD's later Sherlock Holmes stories. American novelist Jack London also was a news reporter and was scheduled to go to South Africa to report on the Boer War.



When his assignment was suddenly cancelled, he instead spent seven weeks in disguise, living "undercover" in the slums of London's East End. Dressed in dirty, used clothes, he lived in rented rooms, doss-houses and the Salvation Army shelter; he sometimes spent the night on the streets. This was difficult as there was a real housing shortage and London ordinances forbade anyone from sleeping on the streets or in parks at night. Policemen had to waken people up and make them move on, and people who were awake all night were not likely to be strong enough the next day to get hired and work.

With hundreds of additional poor folk arriving daily in the capital to fill vacant positions at ever lower wages, it sounds like it was impossible to make a living there. So Watson may have been worried to realize he was steadily spending his way through his army pension. But he and Sherlock were some of the lucky ones, with gainful self-employment, ↗

adequate food and comfortable housing.

Very likely the Baker Street Irregulars were children of the East End and there were a large number of sailors there, one of Sherlock's successful disguises, too. This Jack London book is well worth reading, provides an insight into people's actual situations and gave me an idea of some of the places Sherlock may have explored when looking for information.

### Thackeray and Doyle?

*Sherlockian Sheldon Goldfarb referred to a Thackeray story in reference to Doyle in a recent talk he gave, and I got the book from the King County Library system (central storage, where it has been neglected). However, it is pretty good so I enclose what I found out and did not reveal the ending which is as good as or better than what Doyle did with it. I do hope others read it. "Doyle 'Hoovered' everything up," as Sir Christopher Frye told us in London!*

English novelist and humorist William Makepeace Thackeray lived from 1811-1863 and his works are still read today. He was also on the staff of the English humor magazine "Punch," wrote *Vanity Fair* and other novels, and was the editor of the popular "Cornhill" magazine.

"Comic Tales and Sketches" published in 1841 contains amusing short stories in *The Memoirs of Mr. C.J. Yellowplush* (aka "Yellowplush Papers" in some sources) and one of those memoirs is titled "Miss Shum's Husband," a story in which a woman marries a well-to-do man but does not know how he earns his very good income until...

Continued on Page 7

### The Sound of the Baskervilles

...is a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, serving the greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, U.S.A., and has met monthly since March 31, 1980.

\$25 per year brings Members the monthly newsletter "Ineffable Twaddle", a copy of Beaten's Christmas Annual, and the incalculable benefits of association with a group of certifiable Holmes aficionados.

Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. Location of the meetings may vary.

Regularly scheduled additional events throughout the year include: "The Masters' Celebration" honoring the meeting of Holmes and Watson (March), "The Annual Wreath Throw" commemorating Holmes' loss at Reichenbach Falls (May), "The Dr. John H. Watson Picnic" (July), and "The Will Crakes Memorial Jollification" (December). Other activities—book crawls, teas, plays and gaming events—are as announced.

To join, or to renew your membership, send your check for dues—\$25 for individuals, \$35 for families (U.S. funds only)—payable to The Sound of the Baskervilles—to:

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