

# FROM WATSON'S SCRAPBOOK, by Dr John H. Watson

Welcome to the fifth issue of *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine*. When the notion of this magazine was first proposed to Mr Holmes, he agreed to permit four issues to be published, after which he would decide whether he still wished to permit the use of his name in the title of the periodical. I am both pleased and relieved (for I do receive royalties for this endeavour) to report that Holmes has graciously granted his ongoing permission to allow SHMM to continue.

In celebration thereof, the publisher has devoted this fifth number entirely to Mr Holmes and myself, leading off with my own account of *The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor*. The choice of this story is in keeping with the policy of my colleague and coeditor Mr Kaye, who elects to follow the

approximate dating of our cases as proposed by the late scholar William S Baring-Gould. Now some aficionados regard this chronology as flawed, but so far as I am concerned, it is an acceptable guideline because, in truth, even I cannot always be sure when certain adventures took place. It all happened, after all, quite some time ago.

Why, then, I have been asked, do I not simply consult my own notes? Well, over the years, I have lost track of some of them, and even those still in my possession do not always help, and this for two reasons. Firstly, I was not always scrupulously organized in my record-keeping, and secondly, though I admit this a bit sheepishly, sometimes I cannot decipher my own scrawlings. The cliché you have undoubtedly heard concerning physician's handwriting is certainly applicable to this Holmesian amanuensis.

Now before I turn over this literary podium, so to speak, to Mr Kaye, I have two comments to make concerning the stories and articles in this issue.

The tales all are based on actual incidents from Holmes's and my life. Whenever possible, I made my original notes available to the contributors and, if asked, supplied whatever additional details I was able to recollect. In one instance, however, the business involving the giant rodent, my notes were consulted without my knowledge. (The details may be found in Mr Kaye's collection, *The Resurrected Holmes*, St Martin's Press, 1996). While the events reported in this story are essentially correct, the style of its author differs considerably from my own literary voice. But at least, I judge that by now the world is finally prepared to hear about it.

Two articles in this issue discuss a pair of my writings, *The Adventure of the Illustrious Client* and *The Resident Patient*. I have no cavil with their contents, but my authorial ego wishes to alert you that these pieces reveal plot particulars that might perhaps spoil one's enjoyment of my compositions. I hope, therefore, that if the reader has not yet perused these tales, he or she will avail her- or himself of them before the curtain is

twitched aside and all their secrets are revealed.

— John H Watson, MD

## IN MEMORIAM

Sad news — Len Moffatt, a prolific science fiction and fantasy writer who has contributed poems and an upcoming article to *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine*, died recently. His wife June writes, “Len went into the hospital on the 19th with severe abdominal pain and was operated upon on his 87th birthday. We hoped that he was recovering, but all came to a halt in the wee hours of November 30th.”

In the nonfiction portion of this issue, I am pleased to offer a fascinating treatise about results of the friendship between Arthur Conan Doyle and Bram Stoker — *Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula*. Its author, Robert Eighteen-Bisang, is head of Transylvania Press and in my opinion, the world's leading scholar and authority on Bram Stoker and *Dracula*. His engrossing thesis reveals hitherto-

unguessed correspondences between *The Adventure of the Illustrious Client* and Stoker's great vampire novel.

Bob Byrne provides interesting biographical details about Watson's agent Conan Doyle as he impacted the tale of *The Resident Patient*, and both M. J. Elliott and Lenny Picker review the new BBC TV series that elects to update Sherlock Holmes. My friend and *SHMM* contributor Carole Buggé has also seen these shows and agrees in every particular with Mr Elliott, so I am looking forward to seeing them myself.

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The seven Sherlock Holmes stories in this issue cover a deal of ground, both figuratively and literally, for in addition to Holmes and Watson's traditional London settings and its environs, the Great Detective and his faithful companion and scribe do a deal of traveling: to the south and into Cornwall, to the north into Scotland, specifically Edinburgh and St Andrews, and "across the pond"

to Manhattan and the legendary McSorley's Old Ale House. This venerable establishment, which dates back to 1854, is still in business. *SHMM* contributors Carole Buggé, Stan Trybulski and I have hoisted many a light and dark beer there, as well as enjoying their excellent soups and sandwiches with the meanest onions and hottest mustard you're ever likely to encounter. On top of its libational and culinary pleasures, McSorley's is allegedly haunted by no less than Harry Houdini. A pair of handcuffs he escaped from hang in a prominent spot over the bar.

A final note about this issue — *221 C Baker Street*, a delightful short story in the form of a letter to Mrs. Hudson, was submitted to *SHMM* by a new (to us) author, Alan McCright. With his gracious permission, it appears as part of our ongoing feature, *Ask Mrs Hudson*.

*Canonically yours,*

—Marvin Kaye