



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

Minutes of the Meeting of The Bimetallic Question December 1st, 2016

Date of our next meeting: Thursday, February 2nd, 2017 at 6:30 pm at the Westmount Public Library, Westmount Room, 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, QC.

The quiz at the next meeting: *The Adventure of the Six Napoleons*, from *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, prepared and presented by Raf Jans.

Next meeting's toast presenters: The Master: Bruno Paul Stenson; Dr. Watson: Kristin Franseen; *The Woman*: Susan Fitch; Mrs. Hudson: Rachel Alkallay; The Society: Carol Abramson.

Dear Toasters: Many thanks for emailing a copy of your toast to David Dowse and Susan Fitch !!

Minutes of the meeting of the Bimetallic Question held on Thursday, December 1st, 2016 at the Westmount Public Library, Westmount Room, 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, QC.

Present: Carol Abramson, Rachel Alkallay, Paul Billette, Wilfrid de Freitas, Phil Ehrensaft, Susan Fitch, Kristin Franseen, Chris Herten-Greaven, Raf Jans, Miyako Matsuda-Pelletier, Anne Millar, Erica Penner, Kathryn Radford, Karl J. Raudsepp, Bruno Paul Stenson, Melodie Tardieu, Ron Zilman, and our guests Louise Halperin, Taya Ismail, Jeanne Kriebler-Dion, and Nigel Penney.

Regrets: Mark Altosaar, Jack Anderson, Maureen Anderson, Patrick Campbell, Louise Corda, David Dowse, Elliott Newman, Carole Rocklin, Arlene Scher, and our recent guests Emily Kaplan and Nelly Leitner.

Dear Readers: David Dowse, our Co-Founder and Scribe, was actively engaged on a challenging case and could not be with us at this meeting. Readers are advised that these minutes were penned by an assistant scribe, with a vintage Waterman's Ideal fountain pen, in Diabolo Menthe ink.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by our Sovereign, Carol Abramson at 6:30 pm.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION

1. Welcome to our guests!

We were thrilled to welcome four guests who ventured out to be with us this chilly and rainy autumn evening. Louise Halperin, heard about us from, and was invited by Susan. Jeanne Kriber-Dion found us on the Web as did Taya Ismail, who attended with her uncle, Nigel Penney. A most hearty welcome to all !

2. Review of the Minutes from Our Last Meeting

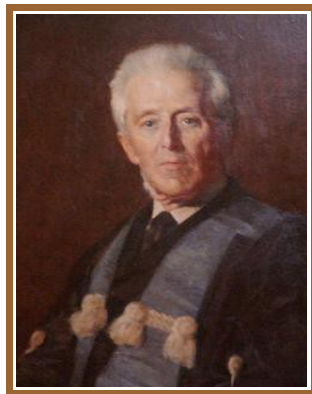
Carol led everyone in thanking David and Susan most graciously for their continued fine work on our Society minutes. Well done !

3. Introducing Our Sovereign-Elect and Recruiting Our Next Mr/Mrs/Ms Hudson

Time flies when you're having fun, and that must be why Carol's past two years at the helm as our dedicated and hard-working Sovereign seems to have gone by so quickly. Congratulations, Carol, on a job well done!

We were delighted to hear Carol's announcement that Raf Jans has accepted the invitation of Society past presidents to become our next Sovereign, for the upcoming two-year term of 2017-2018.

In order to take on this new responsibility, Raf will be relinquishing his present position as Hudson, in which he has served most admirably for the past four years as our Sergeant-at-arms and Vintner. Please let Carol know if you are interested in becoming our new Mr. or Mrs. or Ms.Hudson.



Dr. Joseph Bell

4. Toast to the Master by Ron Zilman

Ron gleaned this excellent toast from History.com

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional detective with the knack for solving crimes through observation and reason was modeled after Dr. Joseph Bell, one of Conan Doyle's medical school professors. Conan Doyle, born in Scotland in 1859, studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh and went on to work as a physician in England while writing fiction in his spare time. "A Study in Scarlet," his first novel featuring Sherlock Holmes, debuted in 1887. Conan Doyle eventually published a total of four novels and 56 short stories starring the London-based sleuth, whose keen observation skills were based in part on those of Joseph Bell.

A fellow Scotsman born in 1837, the charismatic Bell dazzled his students with demonstrations in which he was able to determine a patient's occupation and other personal details just by studying his appearance and mannerisms. In addition to taking classes with Bell, Conan Doyle served for a time as his clerk at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, where he got a further look at the older man's diagnostic methods. Years later, Conan Doyle wrote to Bell: "It is most certainly to you that I owe Sherlock Holmes and though in the stories I have the advantage of being able to place him in all sorts of dramatic positions, I do not think that his analytical work is in the least an exaggeration of some effects which I have seen you produce in the outpatient ward."

The success of the initial Sherlock Holmes stories enabled Conan Doyle to give up his medical practice in 1891 and devote himself to writing; however, the author grew tired of his creation and killed him off in 1893's "The Final Problem." Following a public outcry, Conan Doyle resurrected Holmes and continued to publish stories about the detective until 1927. Conan Doyle, who was knighted in 1902 for penning a lengthy pamphlet defending Britain's participation in the Boer War, died in England in 1930 (19 years after Bell's passing). Sherlock Holmes lives on as one of the best-known literary characters in the English language.

Show and Tell

5. Erica's Amazing Reichenbach Adventure

Erica Penner brought us the exciting news that she has recently returned from a holiday pilgrimage to the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland. She had a wonderful time visiting the Sherlock Holmes Hotel, riding the funicular, and hiking on the Sherlock Holmes Trail. Yet a significant disappointment for her was not being able to find someone to give her directions to locate the plaque installed at the falls by our Society, and now asked us to explain exactly where it is.

Wilfrid noted that a key focus of our 1991-92 collaboration with the Reichenbach Irregulars in creating and installing the plaque was to place it in the correct, historically accurate location, to the left side of the falls, where Sidney Paget's 1893 Strand Magazine illustration records that the fateful struggle between Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty actually took place. An earlier plaque was placed at the base of another trail on the right side of the falls, because this location was more naturally accessible and convenient for tourists.

Erica showed us a really nifty souvenir guide pamphlet she brought home, published by Hatital Berner Oberland tourism office, *Sherlock Holmes and the Reichenbach Funicular*. Please see the attachment accompanying the emailed edition of these minutes for a pdf copy of this pamphlet. www.hastital.ch

6. The Hound of the D'Urbervilles, Angels of Music, and Moriarty Meets His Match

Many thanks to Kristin for sending us this report on the fascinating books she discussed at the meeting !

Kim Newman is a British horror film critic who also writes fiction inspired by pulp fiction and spy movies. His most Sherlockian novel is probably *Professor Moriarty: The Hound of the D'Urbervilles*, in which Moran sarcastically narrates his and Moriarty's encounters with the villains of serial and pulp fiction. My favorite chapters of the novel are "The Red Planet League," where Moriarty gets revenge on a former student who publicly pans *Dynamics of an Asteroid*, and "The Greek Invertebrate," in which we meet Colonel Moriarty, who sometimes is the British military, and Stationmaster Moriarty, who gets his brothers embroiled in a plot involving secret weapons and rumors of a giant worm terrorizing the railway. Newman's newest novel, *Angels of Music*, is set in Paris, and has the Phantom of the Opera leading a *Charlie's Angels*-style ring of female spies under the guise of giving them music lessons. His "angels" at various times include Irene Adler, Sophy Kratides, and others. Together, they take on cases for the French government involving villains and plots adapted from turn-of-the-century opera, theatre, and film.

I found Anna Castle's *Moriarty Meets His Match: A Professor and Mrs Moriarty Mystery* by accident. I had read some of Castle's Francis Bacon mysteries, and joined her mailing list over the summer. In November, she emailed me to say that I had won her monthly drawing for a free book. How could I pass on a new book about Moriarty? *Moriarty Meets His Match* follows ex-Professor (and current assistant patent inspector) Moriarty and music hall actress (and con artist) Angelina Gould as they attempt to solve a murder they both witnessed at an exhibition intended to attract investors for new inventions. I'm not normally a fan of romance novels, but I found the characterization of Moriarty as a frustrated academic charming, enjoyed Castle's detailed research into Victorian investing practices as the setup for the main mystery, and liked the setup for future books. The ending reminded me a lot of the TV show *Leverage*, about a group of con artists who target unethical business people. The next book, *Moriarty Takes His Medicine*, will be about quack doctors and the patent medicine industry, and will be out in January.

7. Whose Crime Is It Anyway?

Taya Ismail revealed to us that she will be playing (who else but !!!) Professor Moriarty in the Sherlockian pastiche play, *Whose Crime Is It Anyway?* a one act play by Jenny-Alice Thompson. We are glad to hear that Taya will keep in touch with us and let us know further details as she and her fellow students at Westmount's The Study School work towards the play's exclusive one night performance scheduled for January 25th, 2017. Additional great news: During the meeting, Taya officially joined the Society. We all gave a warm and enthusiastic welcome to our newest member !

8. The Brothers Baring-Gould's *Annotated Mother Goose*

Raf noted that we Bimetallicers are undoubtedly familiar with William S. Baring-Gould's 1967 classic, *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. But he now produced for our enjoyment an earlier scholarly work that Baring-Gould had collaborated on with his brother Cecil Baring-Gould, *The Annotated Mother Goose*. Published in 1962 by Bramhall House, New York, it includes an introduction and notes by the brothers Baring-Gould, as well as many delightful illustrations by renowned children's book artists such as Randolph Caldecott, Kate Greenaway, and Arthur Rackham.

In 1952, Time Inc. executive and prolific author William S. Baring-Gould's dedication to Sherlockian scholarship was recognized when he was invested in the Baker Street Irregulars as "The Gloria Scott".

9. Chris Reflects on a Special Forensic Dentistry Case

Chris brought us a moving addendum to his discussion at previous meetings concerning the extraordinary lengths parents will go to in order to shield a child implicated in a murder investigation, such as in the update he had brought us on the JonBenét Patricia Ramsey Case. (See item 6 in October 6th minutes) He tonight recalled this compelling case that he was himself some years ago professionally involved in, working directly as part of the investigative team:

The crime scene:

A small boy, aged 1-2 and too young to give comprehensive evidence of the event, was found under a chair with a broken arm, multiple bruises and distinct bite marks covering his lower cheek and upper lip. His life at the moment was no longer in danger, but had the culprit(s) not been identified, and prevented from attacking him again, his life might have been at risk.

Home, family, neighbors, etc.:

In the home were two half-siblings from the father's previous marriage, ages 8-9; neighbours' children ages 5-6. The toddler's parents insist it was the neighbours' younger children responsible, always roughhousing and it must have gotten out of hand. There was apparently no adult witness. Parental instincts seek to divert blame away from the half-siblings and toward the neighbours' children.

Forensic assesment:

Multiple beating injuries could have been caused by anyone, but the bite mark, a small arch with adult incisors would indicate a child approximately 8-9, or older, whence incisors in the mouth of a 5-6 year old could not have made it. Q.e.d.

Conclusion:

The half-sibling(s) had at least once beaten up the toddler seriously. The parents must be apprised of the seriousness of what happened, i.e. a warning to not play so roughly is not enough. Social services must be notified and dated records kept of all that happened.

A tip of the deerstalker hat to Chris for bringing us this report, and for his work on this case advocating for the welfare of a very young child vulnerable to severe abuse by his older half-siblings.

10. Redpath Museum Sherlockian Tour News from Bruno

Bruno reported that he recently guided the Montreal Steampunkers on his special Sherlock Holmes-themed tour of the Redpath Museum, and also brought news that these special Sherlockian tours may become a regular event offered to the visiting public at the Redpath Museum. We look forward to an updated report on this possibility from Bruno!

11. Mary Ann Cotton, *The Crown*, and Remembering the Romanovs and Romanov's

Miyako showed us a biography from the Internet on Mary Ann Cotton, the first recorded English serial killer, who will be played by *Downton Abbey* veteran Joanne Froggatt for ITV's two-part drama, *Dark Angel*. Miyako hears PBS has acquired the rights to air the production in North America in 2017.

The featured cover story for *Totally British* magazine's November 2016 issue is a look inside a new show from Netflix, *The Crown*, and Miyako notes it brings us a total of 60 episodes to look forward to on Queen Elizabeth II, the Royal family, Winston Churchill and his political rivals, and much, much more. There will be spectacular scenes of locales such as Buckingham Palace and 10 Downing Street, as the human drama of the House of Windsor unfolds, from the 1950s to the present. While highly entertaining as a dramatic series, a number of critics have noted historical inaccuracies in its writing, for example the portrayal of Prince Philip as experiencing ongoing resentment towards the Queen, due to his supporting role as her Royal Consort.

The same issue of *Totally British* also offers more fine coverage of the series *Tutankhamun* (see Miyako's report in item 9 in October 6th minutes).

With regard to the book on the Romanovs which Chris showed us at our August meeting, *Blood Relative* (see item 7 of August 4th minutes), Miyako brought for our enjoyment the July/August issue of *Royalty: Your Mirror on the World's Royals*, which featured a richly illustrated article on Rasputin: The Holy Man. Included here were many beautiful and poignant photos of the Russian royal family, the Romanovs.

Note from the Assistant Scribe: During preparation of these minutes, I re-watched a favourite film, the 1947, *Miracle on 34th Street*, on DVD with a commentary by star Maureen O'Hara. In this Christmas film about Santa Claus and the importance of believing in people, a character recalls the Beverly Hills restaurateur Michael Romanov, who came to be thought of and accepted by many as a bona fide Russian prince, transplanted to California. His restaurant, Romanov's, was a meeting place for the elite of American cinema during Hollywood's Golden Age. While some historians denounce Romanov as an impostor and a con-artist, O'Hara remembers him as, "a good and wonderful man", and that all his diners could count on enjoying the most delicious of food at his establishment. That made him prince enough for her, she declares, no matter whether his royal family ties were genuine or not.

12. La Société Sherlock Holmes de France

We were very glad to have Phil Ehrensaft back with us at the meeting this evening, following his time away covering the extraordinary events of the American presidential elections.

Phil has obtained and highly recommends the premiere issue of the new magazine published by the Société Sherlock Holmes de France. He also brought news that the second issue is now out and both can be ordered online at: <http://www.mycrofts.net/magazine-sh>

Many thanks to Phil for sending this additional special report for these minutes !

A thorough discography of Sherlockian DVD & BluRay's is maintained by La société Sherlock Holmes de France. Their home page address of this excellent Sherlockian site is: <https://www.sshf.com/premium-bonus.php>

The discography page is: <https://www.sshf.com/dvdtheque.php>

The affiliated SSHF source for buying Sherlockian publications (including the first 3 issues of their new Sherlock Holmes magazine) and videos is Mycroft's Brother: <http://www.mycrofts.net/>

The link for the Mycroft's Brother DVD boutique is: <http://www.mycrofts.net/boutique-dvd>

They sell the complete BluRay set of the Jeremy Brett TV series and 4 films in European PAL format for \$60 euros, CA \$84 at today's rate of exchange. Amazon Canada's price for a North American format BluRay set is CA \$188. In the USA, a complete set from Amazon would be \$US 145 (\$CA195).

Mycroft's Brother offers what appears to be the full range of existing Sherlock DVD's and BluRay's for quite interesting prices.

Universal DVD & BluRay players that can handle the European PAL format, and others, are not difficult to find.

13. To Be or Not to Be Live on Stage

Wilfrid has recently enjoyed attending the *National Theatre Live* cinema version of Benedict Cumberbatch's *Hamlet*. He noted how the *Sherlock* star's career has soared in recent years, and deservedly so, if we can judge from his excellent acting abilities displayed here as the Danish Prince.

Miyako reported on this series of National Theatre films in our August 4th minutes (see item 12), which also include Cumberbatch's ("Walk this way!") *Frankenstein*.

14. Bimetallicers Bid Fond Adieu to "The Willows"

We learned from Wilfrid at our October 6th meeting the sad news that the cherished venue of a number of past Society events, The Auberge Willow Place Inn, would be closing its doors forever on November 1st, 2016, due primarily to the owner's retirement.

So on Saturday, October 22nd David, Elliott, Eva, Melodie, Paul, and Susan took Hansom cabs to Hudson (named after anyone we know?) and enjoyed a nostalgic luncheon meal together to bid adieu to this wonderful community landmark.

David shared with staff fond memories of past Sherlock Holmes Birthday Dinners that were held there. Susan had brought along from our archive photos, newspaper articles, and a Birthday Dinner menu from back in 1980 when a complete dinner, with wine, taxes, and gratuities included, cost only \$22.00 per person. Paul observed from the photos that Wilfrid and David had a lot more hair back then, including an elegant beard and dashing mustache, respectively.



Paul Billette, Eva Newman, David Dowse, Elliott Newman, Susan Fitch, and Melodie Tardieu

Built as a private residence for George Mallette in 1820, The Willow Inn was destroyed by a terrible fire on June 15th, 1989. When rebuilt, stones from the original structure were used in the construction of the fireplace in the room in which we dined; and in the foyer we took turns sitting in an amazing, large, hand-carved antique chair, that had been rescued during the fire from the original building.



Paul Billette, Susan Fitch, David Dowse, and Elliott Newman - Photo: Eva Newman

15. A Toast to John H. Watson by Karl J. Raudsepp

- J** John, Greek *Iannes* (see below)
- O** Observing operations, providing optional opinions, obliging, not one to overtly overstep, otherwise opposed to opium
- H** Holmes's honest and humble henchman (helper) and housemate
- N** No nonsense note keeper of notorious escapades, even in novelettes

- H** Honourable, heroic, humble, hospital worker (doctor)

- W** Watson – the word-smith, writing wonderful works as the willing workmate
- A** Associate, attached to adventure as an aid-de-camp, the accomplice/assistant
- T** Tolerant and trustworthy yet tenacious, not to be toyed with, the tale teller of testaments to thrilling times of trouble and tyranny
- S** Sherlock's singularly supportive and stout-hearted side-kick and sometimes savior in sinister situations, sociable as well
- O** Often an onlooker, the only option, sometimes overlooked but outstanding
- N** Not to mention ... numerous noteworthy narratives

John - It is of Hebrew origin, and the meaning of John is "God is gracious". Biblical: the name of the longest-lived of the 12 apostles, who was especially loved by Christ. Also the name of John the Baptist, who baptized Christ in the Jordan river. Dozens of variant forms, given names and surnames, male and female, have been created in almost every language – Johannes, Jan, Giovanni, Juan, Joan, Ivan, Sean, Jean, Hannes, Hans, Jack, Jake, etc. Possibly the most popular name in history; kings, popes, saints, heroes, villains, and men of every degree between have borne the name.

16. Mailing Expenses and Membership Fees Discussion

Carol tabled the issue of the expense entailed in carrying out the popular but costly Victorian practice of mailing out our paper minutes to members. Paul noted that postal costs have risen significantly in the last few years and proposed that we consider an increase in our membership fee for those who wish to receive the paper minutes by regular mail. Wilfrid calculates that the cost for printing and mailing Society minutes is \$2.00 per member. Susan suggested that a strongly worded appeal to members to opt for "minutes by email only" be tried out, when we send out our dinner invitations and membership renewal forms later this month. It is decided that we will leave our membership fee at \$25.00 per person (\$35.00 per couple or family) for the coming year, and try to vigorously encourage more people to opt for the "minutes by email" only option.

17. Toast to the Woman by Susan Fitch

Susan reminded us that Dr. Watson opened his chronicle of *A Scandal in Bohemia* with these words: To Sherlock Holmes she was always the woman...

A Toast to The Woman
by Susan Fitch

A woman we know of as *The*
Was never invited to tea.
But Holmes found her sassy,
Quick-witted and classy,
And never forgot this one lassie !

To Irene Adler!

18. Plans for The Master's Birthday Dinner January 21st, 2017

Paul confirmed that the Atwater Club with its elegant Victorian ambiance will once again be our dinner venue, where we can look forward to drinks, canapés and a delectable choice of main course menu selections. Wilfrid told us that invitations with full details will be mailed out during the week between Christmas and New Year's. Cost of the dinner will be \$50.00 per person. The restaurant has given us a heads up that with rising operating expenses being what they are, next year we should anticipate something of a price increase for the dinner.

Susan was happy to report that Montreal lawyer and mystery author Peter Kirby has enthusiastically agreed to be our special guest speaker at the dinner. Peter's most recent novel, *Open Season*, has won the 2016 Arthur Ellis Award for best crime novel from the Crime Writers of Canada.

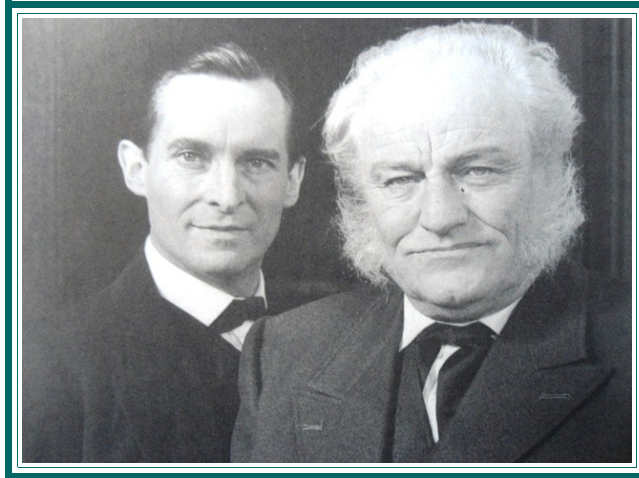
Chris and Susan met up with Kathy Reichs at her recent talk and book-signing at the Eleanor London Côte St. Luc Public Library. Susan then presented Kathy with two very nice large photos, showing her with members and guests at our 2014 dinner. Chris will invite Kathy to attend this year's dinner as his guest, her travel schedule permitting.

Carol's request for volunteers to provide entertainment (such as music or a skit) at the dinner was met with a generous response from Louise, Melodie, Kristin and Taya. We look forward very much to enjoying all their performances on January 21st!

19. Toast to Mrs. Hudson by Kristin Franseen

Previous toasts to Mrs Hudson have speculated as to her reasons for putting up with Holmes, whatever happened to *Mr* Hudson, and her involvement in Holmes's and Watson's adventures. I'd like to briefly consider her interactions with someone from today's story, Mycroft Holmes. However strange it must have been to have Sherlock Holmes as a tenant, Mycroft's conversations with Mrs Hudson must have been even weirder. Despite Mycroft's rigid schedule, he presumably had contact with her at least twice--once around 1891 in order to arrange for Holmes's rooms to be kept as they were prior to his "death," and again in 1895 when he showed up unexpectedly at Baker Street to consult his brother on the problem of the Bruce-Partington Plans. Considering Watson's shock in *The Greek Interpreter* at learning that Holmes even had a brother, what must her reaction have been to Mycroft appearing out of the blue with an odd request. The two brothers were obviously not close, and Mycroft clearly had no intention of living at 221 Baker Street. The rooms may even have still been under repair after Moriarty's attempted arson. I like to think that she may have, similarly to Mary Watson upon being introduced to Mycroft in *A Game of Shadows*, simply responded "there's two of you?" and gone on with her day. Presumably the month-to-month matter of the rent would have been handled by correspondence. What must she have thought on those rare occasions when he made an appearance on Baker Street? What might she have suspected about his motives? What excuses might he have given?

A toast, then, to Mrs. Hudson, who had to put up with the eccentricities of not one, but two Holmeses.



Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes and Charles Gray as Mycroft Holmes
in Granada/WGBH TV's *The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter*
Photo: Richard Lancelyn Green collection

20. Quiz on *The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter* prepared and presented by Chris Herten-Greaven

Chris's inventive and highly challenging quiz yielded the following results:

1 st	Raf Jans	61
2 nd	Carol Abramson	53
3 rd	Kathryn Radford	51

Prizes provided by Chris were scrumptious Christmas or Holiday Season delicacies from the Bramble House.

Comments on the Adventure:

Our meeting was jam-packed with spirited and constructive discussion of important Society concerns, so much so that it led to us starting the quiz portion of the evening rather late. This, in turn, led to an especially thrilling and entertaining marking session, as members haggled with the Quiz Master for every point and half-point (in the quest for victory, or at least defeat with dignity), while we were meanwhile under the, er, if not "gun", then at least the camouflage-panted threat of being ejected from the library at any moment by security, as closing time drew inexorably nearer. Would we end up finishing the quiz marking in the parking lot?

Whew! We got the quiz marked, and indoors (Thanks to security for cutting us some slack!), but there was no time left for our usual discussion on the quiz story.

Yet luckily for us, at home in advance of the meeting, Miyako penned these thoughts on the story for us:

In *The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter* Mycroft talked about his neighbour who lodged on the floor above him, Mr. Melas, saying that he earns his living partly as an interpreter in the law courts, and partly by acting as guide to any wealthy Orientals who may visit the Northumberland Avenue Hotels. Being Japanese myself, I wonder if there were Japanese visitors as well. Considering that India and Hong Kong were part of the British Empire, these wealthy Orientals must have included some Indians and Chinese, but I'm quite certain there were also Japanese, such as foreign students, in the London of the 1890s. The famous Japanese writer, Soseke Natsume (1867-1916) was a big fan of everything British and wrote his diary in English (you can see his face on Japanese paper money) and was in Britain during Sherlock Holmes's time. In the story we read how Mr. Melas was brought to the room, very richly furnished, - and with a suit of Japanese armour! Indeed the armour of Samurai warriors and Ukiyo-E woodblock prints were extremely popular among Europeans of the nineteenth century, so I'm quite happy to read Conan Doyle's mention of this Japanese armour, a bit of Sherlockian cultural exchange between East and West!

21. Toast to the Society by Raf Jans

It is time to pay tribute to the spiritual father of our society. I am not talking about David or Wilfrid, who were merely willing puppets in the play directed by this great mind.

It is time to pay tribute to a man who is at the heart of our society, but seldom receives the appropriate recognition. The man, whose spirit is present every time we mention our organization, but who often remains unmentioned himself.

The man without whom our society would even not exist.

Who is the man who knows everything about the Bimetallic Question? ... Right, it is Mycroft Holmes, Sherlock's brother.

He is only actively present in two stories: The Greek Interpreter, our story of today, and the Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans, in which Sherlock Holmes reveals that Mycroft occasionally is the British Government. Furthermore, he is mentioned in The Final Problem and The Empty House. He helps Holmes to escape and he remains his only contact during his 3 year hiatus.

What do we know about Mycroft? Three things stand out. First of all, he is even smarter than Sherlock, who is the first to admit this. Just as Dr. Watson, we are extremely surprised by the fact that there exists someone who is even more intelligent and rational than Sherlock. Second, he is quite introvert. He feels very much at ease at the Diogenes Club, but he is unlikely to accept our standing invitation to be the next guest speaker at our dinner. Finally, he is completely independent and does not care what others think about him. Holmes describes this much more eloquently as follows: "He would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right." I have never heard a nicer way of saying that someone is a lazy bastard.

In the end, we should not worry too much that we do not mention Mycroft a lot. He probably prefers it this way.

I give you a toast to the Bimetallic Question, and the man who knows all about it, Mycroft Holmes.

22. Close of the Meeting

Carol Abramson, Sovereign, called our meeting to a close at a tad after 9:00 pm.

Our dear friends, you would confer a great favour upon us by joining us at the next meeting of "THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION" which is being held on Thursday, February 2nd, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.

*A Tip of the Deerstalker Hat to All Our Contributors to the December Minutes
for Their News, Comments, Toasts, and Reports !*

Carol Abramson, Paul Billette, Wilfrid de Freitas, Phil Ehrensaft, Susan Fitch, Kristin Franseen,
Louise Halperin, Chris Herten-Greaven, Taya Ismail, Raf Jans, Miyako Matsuda-Pelletier,
Erica Penner, Karl J. Raudsepp, Bruno Paul Stenson, Melodie Tardieu, and Ron Zilman

Our talented Sovereign/President Carol Abramson can be contacted at: ciz.abramson@yahoo.com

Have you detected any errors or omissions in these minutes? If so, please do not hesitate to report same to our Co-Founder and Scribe/Recording Secretary David Dowse at: daviddowse@hotmail.com

Emailing a copy of your toast to both David and our Half-sovereign/Secretary-webmaster Susan Fitch makes the process of including it in the minutes quite a bit easier. Thanks! susanruthfitch@yahoo.ca

New Bimetallic Question members are always welcome. Why not consider bringing a friend to our next meeting to share an amazing evening with us! Membership information details can be obtained from our Florin/Treasurer Paul Billette at: pabillette@hotmail.fr

A tip of the deerstalker hat to our Half-crown/Sergeant-at-arms Hudson, Raf Jans, for making members and guests feel most welcome at all our meetings. raf.jans@hec.ca

