

Minutes of the Meeting of The Bimetallic Question December 6, 2018

Date of our next meeting: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:30pm at the Westmount Public Library, Westmount Room, 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, QC H3Z 1G1

The quiz at the next meeting: *The Blanched Soldier*, prepared and presented by Carol Abramson.

Next meeting's toast presenters: The Master: David Dowse; Dr Watson: Kristin Franseen; *The Woman*, Irene Adler: Rachel Alkallay; Mrs Hudson: Chris Herten-Greaven; The Society: Karl Raudsepp

Dear toasters, please send your December toasts to me at kristin.franseen@mail.mcgill.ca. Thanks!

Minutes of the meeting of the Bimetallic Question held on Thursday, December 6, 2018.

Present: Carol Abramson, Rachel Alkallay, Paul Billette, David Cameron, Louise Corda, Laura Cowan, David Dowse, Kristin Franseen, Wilfrid de Freitas, Chris Herten-Greaven, Raf Jans, Vivianne Lewis, Miyako Matsuda-Pelletier, Elliott Newman, Kathryn Radford, Karl Raudsepp, Arlene Scher, Bruno Paul Stenson, James Turner

Regrets: Anne Millar

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by our Sovereign Raf Jans at 6:31pm.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION

1. Welcome!

We were joined at our meeting by guests David Cameron and Louise Cowan.

2. Sovereign Update

Thank you to Bruno for agreeing to be our new Sovereign.

3. Dinner Update

- Paul confirmed that our annual dinner will take place on January 19. The menu is forthcoming, and will likely cost \$50-\$55 for canapés, dinner, and dessert.
- Our guest speaker will be Christopher Huang, author of *A Gentleman's Murder*.
- The Atwater Club is under new management, and has undergone some renovations.

4. 40th Anniversary Plans (and beyond)!

May 25, 2019 will see the 40th anniversary of the first meeting of the Bimetallic Question! We have already received congratulations from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. Raf, Chris, Rachel, and Bruno have formed a committee to plan suitable celebratory activities. Possibilities proposed at the meeting include:

- A special dinner in May (although Paul noted that many of the culinary schools are closed on weekends)
- A potluck picnic (with a lamb roast by Chris)
- A commemorative photo album (members are asked to gather pictures to contribute)
- Museum visits and/or a walking tour of Old Montréal
- An escape room (perhaps the Sherlock Holmes-themed one visited by Anne and Mélodie?)
- A public lecture at the Westmount Public Library

We are also tentatively planning a series of special events to take place throughout the year at meetings and our 2020 dinner. While this is still up in the air, suggestions included:

- Presentation on the founding of the society, by David and Wilfrid
- Longstanding members sharing memories of past events
- A mystery talk by Karl
- Members sharing special items on Sherlockian research (Raf is interested in sharing his work on the Hound of the Baskervilles)

In order to fundraise for these and any other events, Bruno is looking into options for Bimetallic Question branded merchandise.

If you have any additional ideas or would like to propose a presentation and/or event, please contact Raf.

As we look to the future, please note that the Westmount Public Library has confirmed our regular meeting space for February, April, and June 2019 (with future dates to be confirmed later).

5. Past Events

Former member and past Sovereign (1994-95) of our Society, Kevin Chappell, was in Montreal on Friday, November 30. Wilfrid hosted Kevin and available members for tea at his home. As Wilfrid writes, Kevin was one of the contributors to our 2005 book *Musings from an Overturned Beehive*, and was our chauffeur to Sherlockian conventions back in the 1980s because he was one of the first people to own one of the then-newfangled minivans!

Donald Zaldin, BSI, M.Bt. and Barbara Rusch, BSI, M.Bt., both Master Bootmakers from The Bootmakers of Toronto, were in Montreal on Monday Nov. 5. Susan and Paul had dinner with them at the Sakura Restaurant, where Miyako works. Donald was here to give a presentation at the Dickens Fellowship on "Charles Dickens: Father of the Victorian Christmas." Paul writes that they had a very interesting evening. He notes that Donald would be willing to give a talk at next year's dinner, and also suggests we consider inviting him to give a talk as part of our 40th anniversary events.

6. Congrats!

Congratulations to David Dowse, winner of our 2nd Bimetallic Question Archive photo contest! This time, our mystery photos represented our 24 September 1994 event, A Day with Sherlock Holmes.

7. Toast to the Master, by Anne Millar

Anne explored some of the contradictions of Holmes's character and why we continue to love him despite (or maybe, because) of them: in Anne's absence her toast was read by Kristin.

We are all of us aware of Sherlock Holmes--the Master stands as a colossus of popular culture. You and I know who Sherlock Holmes is.

We know how he dresses, in a country hunting hat and cloak-- except when groomed to Carline perfection for a night out, or when unrecognizable to friend or foe alike, as a frail clergyman or hollowed opium fiend.

We know he is a thinking machine, aloof and filled only with the cold light of logic-- except when habitually smiling, laughing, pulling pranks with clients, giggling, and the like.

We know he has no place for the softer emotions, as they interfere with the proper prosecution of crime — except when it comes to young lovers being brought together against adversity, women avenging their mistreatment, or just seasonally appropriate forgiveness.

We know he is infallible, absolutely correct in all his conclusions, unbeatable and always 5 steps ahead of any who dare oppose him — unless of course, they dress in drag, buy an extra-large coffin, give their clothes to charity, or love their child more than the censure of society.

We are here (most of us, anyways) because of this dreamy devotee of violin-land, this sad loss to the theatre, a scientist and drug addict, armchair reasoner and bareknuckle brawler — a hero for the Victorian age and always.

And so I give you, the Master of a thousand faces, Sherlock Holmes!

Show and Tell

8. *"If I find chance signal message remember code agreed..."*

Chris's guest Laura Cowan gave a presentation on the politics, codes, and controversies surrounding the use of quilts on the Underground Railroad. Laura fell in love with quilting while touring in Italy, and quickly became interested in the sociology and economics of quilting throughout history. She explored the conflicting political and business interests in Canada and the US during the first half of the 19th century, the possible symbolic meanings of quilts to fugitive slaves and abolitionists, and (a mystery truly worthy of Holmes's and Watson's love of codes and secret societies) the problems of tracing history based so heavily in secrecy and oral sources.



North Star quilt square (by Barb Fife).

9. “Yet there was certainly an element of comedy.”

Louise brought in the film section of the Westmount Gazette, which included a mention of the upcoming *Holmes & Watson* (which opens on December 25). The film stars Will Ferrell as Holmes and John C. Reilly as Watson, with Rebecca Hall as coroner Grace Hart, Ralph Fiennes as Moriarty, Rob Brydon as Lestrade, Pam Ferris as Queen Victoria, and Hugh Laurie as Mycroft. The plot revolves around Moriarty threatening to assassinate the queen—perhaps a callback to the 1947 radio episode *The Case of Professor Moriarty and the Diamond Jubilee*? Based on the trailer, it seems to be a parody of the latest batch of Holmes-related media, with Reilly sardonically claiming that “we sat down and said ‘What are the most neglected characters in literature?’ The world needed this.”



Watson (Reilly), Victoria (Ferris), and Holmes (Ferrell) try to take a selfie.

10. “I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories”

Kristin wanted to let the members know of the latest book in Laurie R. King and Leslie Klinger’s series of short stories “inspired by the Canon.” It is called *For the Sake of the Game: Stories Inspired by the Sherlock Holmes Canon*, and was released on December 4. While she’s not yet done reading it, she enjoyed the continuation of William Kotzwick’s and Joe Servello’s Inspector Mantis mysteries.



Cover of *For the Sake of the Game*

11. Toast to Dr Watson, by Wilfrid de Freitas

Wilfrid gave us an overview of Watson from Holmes’s perspective:

After nearly forty years of toasts being offered to Dr. Watson in our Society, it occurred to me that instead of offering a personal toast extolling his virtues, it might be a good idea to recap some of the things which others have said about him.

One of the most well-known is by Holmes in *His Last Bow*: “Good old Watson! You are the one fixed point in a changing age!” Perhaps less well-known, but equally complimentary, he also says, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, “it is at the hour of action that I turn to you.” Or, again in *HOUN*, perhaps somewhat backhandedly, “it may be that you are not yourself luminous, but you are a conductor of light. Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it.” In *The Blinded Soldier*, Holmes says “...Watson has some remarkable characteristics of his own to which in his modesty he has given small attention...”

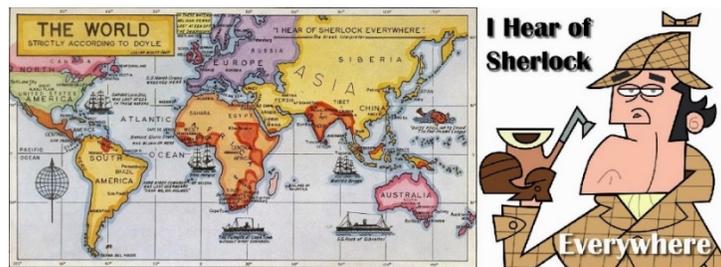
On the other hand, Holmes could be equally caustic when in *The Abbey Grange* he chastises Watson thus “You slur over work of the utmost finesse and delicacy, in order to dwell upon sensational details which may excite, but cannot possibly instruct, the reader.” Or, as in *The Copper Beeches*, “you have degraded what should have been a course of lectures into a series of tales.”

Of course, one could cite many more bouquets and even brickbats, but since our toasts should always be short and to the point, as far as we are concerned, it is perhaps Mycroft to whom we should turn for his passing comment in *The Greek Interpreter* which sums up Watson’s raison d’être, and for which all of us here this evening will always be grateful: “I hear of Sherlock everywhere since you became his chronicler.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Doctor Watson.

12. “...there is nothing so important as trifles.”

Raf recommended the Sherlockian website *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere*, available at www.ihearofsherlock.com. In addition to their blog, which covers a variety of topics related to Sherlockiana, the Baker Street Irregulars, and new Holmes-themed media, they have two podcasts. One, *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere*, features interviews with prominent Sherlockians and readings from historical issues of the *Baker Street Journal*. The other, *Trifles*, covers Canonical minutiae. As of this writing, the most recent *Trifles* is about hansom cabs and other forms of transportation in the Canon, and the most recent *IHOSE* features self-declared “Sherlock Holmes media pundit,” Howard Ostrom, author of the *Sherlock Holmes Cyclopaedia*.



Header of the IHOSE blog and podcast

13. “His car passed ours.”

Wilfrid recently purchased the personalized licence plate “221B.” (He tried to get 221BSI but the SAAQ said “no”!)



14. ***“You have visited Japan.”***

Miyako shares reports of a new Sherlock Holmes bar in Tokyo:

This elegant bar, with its 19th-century English style, is a big hit with ladies who want to experience Victorian England’s atmosphere. Japanese Sherlock Holmes fans claim that Holmes loved whiskey and soda; therefore, they’re serving Dewar’s Scotch whisky and soda. Also, is roast beef Holmes’s favourite? In this bar, they serve “Deluxe Roast Beef Sandwiches.” To me, Holmes was basically a gaunt man who actually didn’t care very much for food. I think Holmes ate whatever Mrs Hudson served, aside from his occasional visits to restaurants, parties, and so on. Anyway, I hope that Holmes fans from Canada will visit Sherlock House in Tokyo when you visit Japan! And I wonder if anyone in Montréal might open the same type of bar here??



Sherlock House in Tokyo’s Ikebukuro District

15. **Toast to the Woman, by Kristin Franseen**

Kristin wondered about a possible hidden meaning behind the variety of pastiches and adaptations featuring Irene:

Irene Adler is a paradox. I think that, as Holmesians, whatever our views, we have a desire to want to explain her through details. The prima donna from, of all places, New Jersey. The adventuress and alleged would-be blackmailer of “dubious and questionable memory.” The respectable barrister’s wife, who escaped to an unknown fate in America. The photo on Holmes’s desk and the coin on his watch chain. The woman who beat Sherlock Holmes.

In various pastiches and adaptations, she has been cast as a love interest, a villain, a detective in her own right—and sometimes, a combination of all three. She is memorialized in both the Baker Street Irregulars’ singing of “We Never Mention Aunt Clara” and in the name of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes. For some, she is representative of a scandalous escape from Victorian mores; for others, a twenty-first century feminist icon.

But the “real Irene,” whoever she might be, remains a mystery. In the opening pages of the essay “Long-Haired Iopas,” about the problems of reconstructing musical mysteries from the plaster of supposition, her fellow New Jerseyan-turned-cosmopolitan-musician Edward Prime-Stevenson remarked that music needed its own archaeologists, for “music is rich in such fossils; abundant are such to be found without digging laboriously deep.” Might this not be by design in Irene’s case? Through music and various affairs and adventures (the majority of which have not yet seen print), Irene was able to evade not only Sherlock Holmes and the King of Bohemia, but also the censure and prying eyes of all of us, from Watson’s original readers onward. One hopes that, despite Watson’s mention of the “late” Irene Adler, she is still out there somewhere. After all, much like Holmes and Watson, we have not yet come across her obituary in the Times, so how could she possibly be dead? Perhaps all of the adaptations, the interpretations and reinterpretations and misinterpretations, are naught but one more smokescreen to throw over-eager Sherlockians off the scent. In which case, we should all enthusiastically raise our glasses to Irene, who is indeed on a very different level. To the Woman!

16. Toast to Mrs Hudson, by Miyako Matsuda-Pelletier

Miyako shared a Victorian recipe for buns from Mrs. Beeton, and mused about Mrs. Hudson's housekeeping skills:

As you all know, I love talking about food. Mrs. Hudson, the landlady of Holmes and Watson for many years, prepared their meals. And the Canon shows that they're always eating good breakfasts (coffee, eggs, ham or bacon, bread, etc.). Almost 130 years later, I think some people in Britain still eat the same style of breakfast, and I'd like to imagine that Mrs. Hudson made those dishes with tender loving care!

By the way, did you know that baking powder was invented in the 1850s? Yeast has been used since antiquity to make dough rise to bake bread, but it takes time for yeast to generate carbon dioxide. Therefore, it isn't ideal for cakes, biscuits, muffins, cookies, etc. Before baking powder, people would beat eggs to speed up the process. Thanks to Mrs. Isabella Beeton (1836-1865), author of the most successful European cookbook ever published, making good plain buns and muffins became very popular in Victorian England. I'd like to introduce you to how Victorian ladies made buns, with a recipe from Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management:

Ingredients—1lb of flour, 6oz of good butter, 1/4lb of sugar, 1 egg, ¼ pint of milk, 2 teaspoons of baking powder, and a few drops of essence of lemon. Mode—warm the butter, without oiling it; beat it with a wooden spoon; stir the flour gradually with the sugar, and mix these ingredients well together. Make the milk lukewarm, beat up with it the yolk of the egg and essence of lemon and stir these into the flour. Add the baking powder, beat dough well for about 10 minutes, divide it into 24 pieces, put them into buttered tins or cups and bake in a brisk oven from 20-30 minutes. This will make 12 buns. (If you want more flavorings, you can put raisins, blueberries, grated orange peels, or nuts, or whatever you like.) It's very easy to make, and I like the fact that Victorians were eating these buns already! Mrs. Hudson, I'm sure, made sure that breakfast was ready on time...or that the coffeepot was polished...or that nice hot tea was served with the cakes or buns. Of course, she was the gatekeeper to the shrine of justice, but being around Holmes and Watson with nourishing meals made the difference, I bet! So, I'd like to imagine Mrs. Hudson making these buns to serve with coffee or tea. Probably coffee. A grateful toast to Mrs. Hudson for taking good care of Holmes and Watson! To Mrs. Hudson!

17. Toast to the Society, by Bruno Paul Stenson

Bruno regaled us with the delightful puns and references found in the names of Sherlockian societies around the world:

Much has been made in toasts past about the variety of people one meets in Sherlock Holmes Societies. From casual readers to canonical obsessives; from tyros to experienced, detail-savvy specialists; from experts in one field to authorities in an other, all can be found within the ranks of Sherlockian Societies, and all can be found ready to help others better understand and enjoy the adventures of Holmes and Watson.

It must be pointed out, however, that this diversity within each Sherlockian Society is but one of the multiplicities evident among Holmes's devotees. As evidenced by their names, variations can be seen from one Society to the next. Some have a very prosaic, generic name (the Sherlock Holmes Society of India, for example), while others have a specific, scholarly name (the Czech Republic's Institute for the Study of the Life and Work of Sherlock Holmes comes to mind). Some are named after canonical story titles (France's Cercle littéraire de l'escarboucle bleue named for "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle"), others are named after elements within particular stories (Montréal's Bimetallic Question named for Holmes' brother Mycroft's speciality mentioned in "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans"). Each of these Societies has a unique name and, as can be seen by the following list, some are perhaps more "unique" than others.

- In New York: The Priory Scholars, combining the name of "The Adventure of the Priory School" with the Czech Republic Society's scholarly promise. In keeping with this, in their own jargon, they "hold classes" based on texts from the Canon.
- In Portland, Oregon: The Noble and Most Singular Order of the Blue Carbuncle, a wonderfully pretentious name borrowing, as does the French Society, from the title "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle". Reflecting their long and dignified name, their mission statement is equally long and dignified: "The singular purpose of the Order is to promote, extend, further, advance, encourage, dignify, elevate, and generally improve the study and employment of the Sacred Writings and Sherlockian Studies".
- In Dallas, Texas: The Diogenes Club, adding members to the club cofounded by Mycroft Holmes and which is mentioned in "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans" as well as in "The Greek Interpreter". Like all proper gentlemen's clubs, it has a fine pedigree, being "a scion member of the Baker Street Irregulars (of New York) and the Franco-Midland Hardware Company (of England)".
- In Dayton, Ohio: The Agra Treasurers, adding members to the original quartet of jewel thieves from The Sign of the Four. Dayton, Ohio is known as the Gem City.
- In the Akron, Ohio area: Mrs. Hudson's Lodgers, bringing its members into the very home of The Master as run by his landlady whom we first meet in A Study in Scarlet. Of course, this club was founded by members meeting in a tavern, an original function of taverns being to offer lodging to travelers.
- In Carbondale, Illinois: The Occupants of the Empty House, an oxymoronic name if ever there was one, based on "The Adventure of the Empty House". Their meetings have no quizzes. Empty, indeed!
- In Puget Sound, Washington State: The Sound of the Baskervilles, a wonderful pun on the title of the third Holmes novel, The Hound of the Baskervilles. They are a self-described "irreverent group" whose first meeting was held on the Seattle to Bainbridge Island ferry.
- In Sweden: The Baskerville Hall Club, adding residents to the ancestral home of the Baskervilles, they of The Hound. Their website, of course, is in Swedish. Google Translate helpfully gives their mission statement this shaky phrasing in English: "Our task for the public is to watch television, books and other media, to counteract and correct the wreckage of Sherlock Holmes, which sometimes occurs when script does not follow the original stories".
- In England: The Scandalous Bohemians, adding numbers to those who would persecute Irene Adler in the name of a certain king in the first of the short stories, "A Scandal in Bohemia". I would gladly say more about this Society but their online link leads to a very wordy page written in Chinese. I learned my lesson with the Swedish club. Undeniably scandalous.
- In Sussex, U.K.: The Retired Beekeepers, companions to Holmes in his beekeeping retirement mentioned in "The Adventure of the Second Stain". In summer and winter they publish The Practical Handbook of Bee Culture in which we find "anything you could print on a piece of paper and hand to a fellow Sherlock Holmes aficionado".
- In Denver, Colorado: Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients, adding members to the group of ill and wounded whom Watson has abandoned to solve crimes with Holmes and who have long attracted sympathy from readers. Presidents of this Society are called Chief Surgeons.
- Finally, online: Canon Fodder Friday, that's canon with only one "n", making the name a wonderful pun for those soldiering in the front lines of Holmesian lore.

In all of these names and many, many more, we find differences in interest or focus, but there are also elements in common. We see in them an admiration for Holmes, a passion for studying The Canon, a love of language and, implied in all of that, an attachment to likeminded people, to fellowship, to Society with a capital "S".

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you The Society.

Quiz and Story Discussion

18. Quiz on "The Red Circle" prepared and presented by Raf Jans

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------------|----|---|
| Results: | 1 st Carol | 45 | <i>Mr. Doyle and Dr. Bell</i> |
| | 2 nd Kristin | 43 | <i>The Case of the Baker Street Irregular</i> |
| | 3 rd Wilfrid | 39 | <i>The Language of Bees</i> |

19. Discussion of the Story

Before the meeting began, a few members observed that there wasn't much of a case for Holmes to unravel, since his initial assumptions about a secret couple turned out to be correct and the Pinkertons did most of the detective work in America prior to Mrs. Warren's arrival at 221B. Others noted connections between this story's depiction of a Mafia-like criminal organization and "The Six Napoleons."

Miyako has some additional musings about the historical context of the story and the changes made in the Granada adaptation:

This is a part of the short story collection *His Last Bow*, published in 1917 in the middle of World War I. With no end in sight, it might reflect the dark atmosphere and disillusionment of war and crime's threat to family and society. In this case, the young couple took the matter into their own hands! Also, since I'm sure it was extremely difficult for Conan Doyle to come up with original stories all the time, this is another story of the Italian secret society (and underground mafia involvement), like "The Six Napoleons." Instead of a story of a thief (like the stolen pearl), it's a story of the violence and unwanted sexual attentions of a member of the Red Circle. Giuseppe Gorgiano sets his eyes on Emilia Lucca. The love triangle became deadly, and Gorgiano follows them to London. An international criminal situation, indeed!

And, as fellow Society members know about the Pinkertons, I'd like to add a few facts here. In this story, Holmes encounters the Scotland Yard detective inspector Gregson, accompanied by a Mr. Leverton "of Pinkerton's American Agency." Holmes immediately replies, "the hero of the Long Island cave mystery?" It's full name was the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. Scottish immigrant Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884) founded the first detective agency in the US in 1850. It became very famous when it foiled a plot to assassinate President-Elect Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) on the way to his inauguration. Lincoln was so impressed, he hired the Pinkerton agents as security guards during the American Civil War. Aside from Scotland Yard, it comes as no surprise that Holmes knew about Leverton and the Pinkerton agency, due to his private contacts in the US and Continental Europe. I'm certain that Holmes and the Pinkertons were aware of each other's' activities.

In the end, Holmes wants to go to Covent Garden for "a Wagner night." The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden was built in 1858 to introduce operas to the British public. I wondered why they call it Covent Garden. It turned out that it was originally a flower-market, with fruits and vegetables! The middle classes and gentry (like the Holmes family) enjoyed increased access to culture through the opera house, museums, and art galleries.

As I compare this story to the Granada TV series (starring Jeremy Brett), the writers changed the story a bit. In the original Canon, Holmes calls Signora Lucca to come, but the TV episode shows that both Gennaro and Emilia are together to confront Black Gorgiano himself, and viewers can see that Gennaro killed him. Eventually, the Luccas escape and immigrate to Australia. In the Canon, we don't know where Gennaro is, so Emilia tells the whole story and goes with Gregson to see the chief at Scotland Yard. The TV version shows that Gennaro already had the tickets to Australia. It seems that many people in 19th-century Britain left their homeland for various opportunities or second chances. Some did make a fortune abroad, like a few characters in the Canon. Even Charles

Dickens's most autobiographical work, *David Copperfield*, shows the flamboyant Mr Micawber and his family going to Australia for a second chance after his time in debtor's prison. Although Conan Doyle never wrote how Gennaro and Emilia ended up, it's a bit of a happier ending in the TV adaptation. As for Italians, incidentally, the earliest Italian arrivals in Australia were 217 people in 1881. As the new country needed the labour force, many Italians came to Australia through the 1890s to work in the mining and sugarcane industries. As they said, "Viaggio ai confine del mondo" (the journey to the end of the world). So, let us hope that Gennaro and Emilia ended up happily in the land down under!

20. Close of the Meeting

Carol won the evening's raffle. Raf adjourned the meeting at 9pm.

21. Appendix 1: David's Thoughts on *The Real Downton Abbey*

After the meeting, David emailed me the following thoughts on Jacky Hyams's book:

In it, he writes that Sir William Arbuthnot-Lane, the famous Scottish surgeon, along with Dr. Joseph Bell, with their methods of observation and deductive reasoning were the inspiration for Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. I had never heard of this Arbuthnot-Lane before. There is a lot of medical stuff, but not much to link him to Doyle except that they were both doctors in Edinburgh at about the same time and that Lane was greatly admired in his field.

22. Appendix 2: Kristin's Thoughts on *Practical Handbook of Bee Culture*

Bruno's toast mentioned Brighton-based Retired Beekeepers and their journal, a combination of art, poetry, essays, and fiction, with an emphasis on gender in the Canon and the history of sexuality in the Victorian and Edwardian eras (the Beekeepers are, according to their website, an all-inclusive LGBT+ Sherlock Holmes group). To have something to read on a long plane trip, I recently downloaded a copy of their Winter 2017-2018 issue on domesticity. I especially enjoyed Ariana Maher's essay "A Dissection of the *Cyanea capilata*," which explores the differences between the depiction of Holmes's retirement in the Canon and in Bert Coules's radio adaptation of LION. All of the issues of *Practical Handbook* are available (as free downloads or by donation for print issues) through the Beekeepers' website at www.retiredbeekeepers.tumblr.com/handbook.

Contributions? Corrections? Blatant Americanisms? Contact your humble scribe at:

kristin.franseen@mail.mcgill.ca. Those who plan on contributing toasts, original fiction, and/or lengthier reports are especially encouraged to email their texts as soon as possible to be included in the minutes. I welcome creativity and contributions from old and new members alike! Longer reports may be edited and/or condensed slightly for space, as space is limited to 10 pages (5 sheets of paper).