

# THE MAGIC DOOR

FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE COLLECTION • TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

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## A Purchase From the Dan Posnansky Auction: Lot 16

DAYNA NUHN

Dayna Nuhn, BSI, ASH, MBt, ETP is a longstanding member of *The Bootmakers of Toronto* and the Friends of the ACD Collection. She has authored numerous articles on Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as serving as Publications Director for the Friends and co-editor of *Magic Door*.



Dan Posnansky  
Photo courtesy of Glen Miranker

When Dan Posnansky's collection of Sherlockiana was auctioned on December 19, 2017, it created quite a stir in the Sherlockian world. Dan spent over 60 years combing book stores and estate sales to amass a truly remarkable library that reached an estimated 10,000 volumes. The auction was billed as the largest single Sherlock Holmes collection to be sold. When Posnansky is on the trail of new acquisitions, he enjoys the hunt as much as the treasure itself. Dan is a

mentor to other bibliophiles and someone who generously shares his finds with researchers. His long-time friend Glen Miranker notes, "Spending time with a gifted collector can rub off. I call it the Posnansky Effect."

Working together, the Friends and the Toronto Public Library acquired a small part of the Posnansky Collection by purchasing Lots 16 and 21 at the auction. I found Lot 16 particularly interesting. It consists of two letters, written on Hindhead stationery, from Arthur Conan Doyle to Grant Richards.

Franklin Thomas Grant Richards (1872-1948) was a young friend of Arthur Conan Doyle who founded the Grant Richards Publishing Company in 1897. Richards wanted to publish ACD's book of short stories, *Round the Fire*, but Conan Doyle refused that request and instead offered him *A Duet with Occasional Chorus*, which Richards published in 1899 in a large print run. This semi-autobiographical novel tells the story of Frank Crosse and

Maude Selby, from their courtship through to the birth of their first child. The novel was not well received by either the critics or the public and was a financial failure for both author and publisher.

Grant Richards was also the nephew of the author Grant Allen (1848-99). ACD was Allen's friend and neighbour. When Allen was dying, Conan Doyle helped him finish his novel, *Hilda Wade, A Woman with Tenacity of Purpose*. ACD worked on the last two installments, Chapter 11: The Episode of the Officer who Understood Perfectly, and especially Chapter 12: The Episode of the Dead Man Who Spoke. ACD did his best to imitate Allen's writing style, but he received minimal acknowledgement for his work. The book was first serialized in *The Strand* from late 1899 to early 1900. Grant Richards published his uncle's novel in 1900. These two books comprise all of ACD's writings published by Grant Richards.

With this in mind, here are the letters from Lot 16:

[undated] Undershaw, Hindhead, Haslemere

My Dear Grant Richards

Many thanks for cheque & pleasant note. I am quite satisfied with the whole matter and owe you all thanks for your loyalty to the book and for your endeavors to push it.

With kindest regards

Yours truly

A Conan Doyle

The second letter reads:

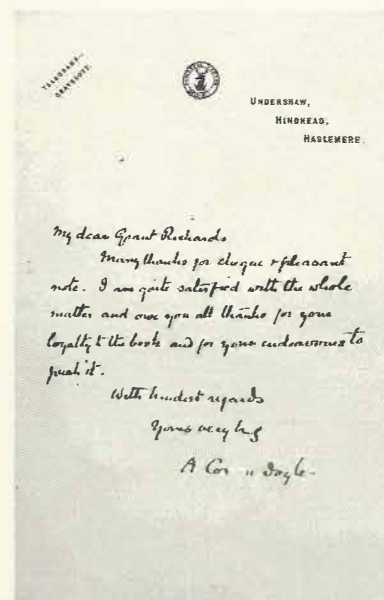
[undated] Undershaw, Hindhead, Haslemere

Dear Grant Richards

I should like by Xmas to know definitely about the book. It struck me that it might suit you better to let me retain the American rights—in which case you could try your English experiment for £3000

Yours

A Conan Doyle



A PURCHASE FROM DAN POSNANSKY AUCTION: PAGE 6...





## BEYOND SHERLOCK HOLMES

# The White Company

MICHAEL LOZINSKI

*Michael Lozinski is a Bootmaker of Toronto and an IT professional who enjoys escaping through the magic door into the world of fiction and fantasy. He is a Sherlockian by natural inclination and a Doylean by spousal intercession. This is his first article for Magic Door.*

When asked which book Arthur Conan Doyle considered his best work, he replied, "I think 'The White Company' is my best book, but when books treat of entirely different subjects in entirely different ways it is very hard to institute any comparison."<sup>1</sup> He commented elsewhere, "I was young and full of the first joy of life and action and I think I got some of it into my pages," and the combination of this work and *Sir Nigel*, a follow-up prequel to *The White Company*, "made an accurate picture of that great age, and that as a single piece of work they form the most complete, satisfying and ambitious thing I have ever done."<sup>2</sup>

One of his first works, *The White Company* was initially published in serialized form in *Cornhill Magazine* from January through December of 1891, but was released in its complete form in September of that year. Set during the Hundred Years War, with surrounding events matching the years 1366-67, it tells the stories of twenty-year-old squire Alleyne<sup>3</sup> Edricson and Sir Nigel Loring, the fabled knight whom he serves. ACD was raised on tales of chivalry and drilled in heraldry by his mother, Mary Foley Doyle, and an almost childlike adoration for these subjects shines through the pages.

It has been suggested that, as a novelist, Arthur Conan Doyle was a great short story writer. *The White Company* is an excellent case in point. The plot is constructed in strictly chronological fashion with short encounters and adventures making up most of the thirty-eight chapters, possibly due to the serialized nature of its publication. As such, it opens with the story of a supporting character, Hordle John, who, while walking along the road to Minstead,<sup>4</sup> later joins up with the young hero, Alleyne Edricson, a naïve but strong-willed and principled clerk setting out to find his place in the world. Sir Nigel Loring does not enter the tale until a quarter of the way through the book. The titular White Company of archers itself only makes its debut about the halfway point.

The language of the book is flowery and archaic—and I find it delightful. Here is a sample speech from Samkin Aylward, a raucous and earthy, yet stalwart archer of the White Company:

'By my hilt! lads,' cried Aylward, jumping upon the fallen trunk, 'I think that we could not look the girls in the eyes if we let the prince cross the mountains and did not pull string to clear a path for him. It is very well in time of peace to lead such a life as we have had together, but now the war-banners in the wind once more, and, by these ten finger-bones! if he go alone, old Samkin Aylward will walk beside it.'<sup>5</sup>

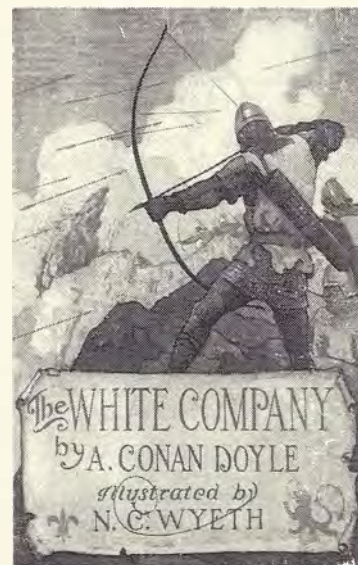
If you can appreciate the poetic cadence in this prose, then you will certainly enjoy the rest of the novel. If not, then *The White Company* is likely not for you. Yet no full understanding of the author would be complete without reading it.

The concepts of chivalry and honour are explored continuously throughout the novel. Sir Nigel is ever in search of situations where there is "honour to be gained... and every hope of advancement"<sup>6</sup> in which he can take a side and fight:

We go to France, and from thence I trust to Spain, in humble search of a field in which we may win advancement and perchance some small share of glory. For this purpose I would have you know that it is not my wont to let any occasion pass where it is in any way possible that honour may be gained. I would have you bear this in mind, and give great heed to it that you may bring me word of all cartels, challenges, wrongs, tyrannies, infamies, and wronging of damsels. Nor is any occasion too small to take note of, for I have known such trifles as the dropping of a gauntlet, or the flicking of a breadcrumb, when well and properly followed up, lead to a most noble spear-running.<sup>7</sup>

Young Alleyne is seeking to earn his own spurs as a knight so that he can honourably ask a young noblewoman to marry him. Sheltered by an upbringing in a monastery, Alleyne learns quickly about people in the secular world through a series of odd or unpleasant characters and curious encounters, some of which seem to have been added more because it pleased Conan Doyle to tell their tales than for how they furthered the story. Yet throughout the book ACD takes pains to address with sympathy the plight of the common man and trumpet the changes which were sweeping the land to lay waste to the feudal system and bring in a greater level of equality between the classes. *The White Company* was dedicated to the cause of British federation, as Conan Doyle explained in an 1892 letter to an unknown correspondent.<sup>8</sup>

ACD also explored his attitudes to Christian faith and the church through Alleyne's encounters with characters of varying religious orders on his journeys, often with negative reflections on the clergy and on most forms of asceticism. In *The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, John Dickson Carr writes that "If he might not believe in a religion, he could believe in a creed, a pattern of



THE WHITE COMPANY: PAGE 7...







## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

# Reflections on the Shaw Festival's *Hound of the Baskervilles*

Festival Theatre, Niagara-on-the-Lake,  
August 1 – October 27, 2018

CLIFF GOLDFARB

*Clifford Goldfarb, BSI, MBt, ETP is Chair of the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library. He is a member of the Baker Street Irregulars, the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, and the Bootmakers of Toronto. He writes and speaks frequently on Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes.*

I'm not sure how many productions of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* I've seen in my lifetime—well over twenty, if films, TV productions, stage plays, radio broadcasts, and even the Toronto Dance Theatre's tap dance version are included.<sup>1</sup> All of them were more or less faithful to Arthur Conan Doyle's original text. I'm excluding one or two farces, for which I had low expectations (this turned out to be optimistic on my part). Of course, all took some liberties: reducing the number of characters, inserting a séance, and borrowing snippets of dialogue from other Holmes tales. But this was both understandable and forgivable. As each scene unfolded, I could usually predict what was coming next.

So I ought to have been disappointed with the Shaw Festival's 2018 production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, based on a script by R. Hamilton Wright and David Pichette, directed by Tim Carroll and starring Damien Atkins and Ric Reid as Holmes and Watson. For two and a half acts it loosely follows the original, with the major characters all there (breaking a few stereotypes in the casting, but that is acceptable in these more enlightened days). Spoiler alert for Toronto Bootmakers: Sir Henry's boot, a key plot element, was made—not in Toronto—but in Red Deer, Alberta. Even the running joke seemed to fit the spirit of the story—Holmes threw out a quote, misattributed its author, and then Watson informed him it was Shakespeare.

Then came the shocking climax—I'm not going to tell you what it was—except that it was a complete deviation from orthodoxy! And I loved it. More importantly, it allowed me to sit through a familiar Sherlockian

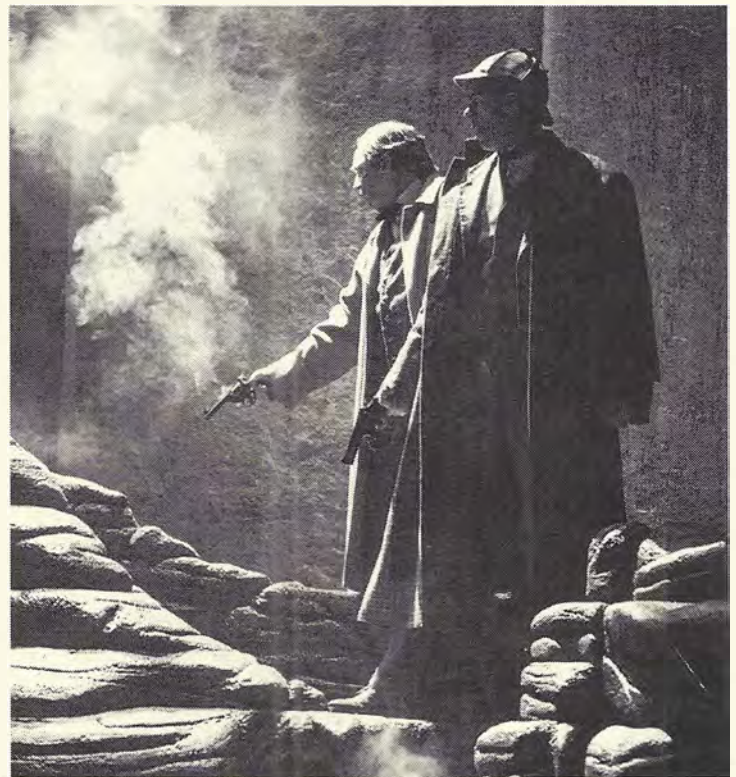
tale and appreciate it afresh. That's because, despite the liberties with the plot, the relationship between Holmes and Watson remains true to Conan Doyle's vision. I tell myself that maybe, just maybe, my long-held inclination to criticize non-Canonical portrayals is a bit self-righteous. Perhaps each writer and each viewer needs to reinvent these two characters who never lived, except in the imagination of millions of readers and viewers, and so will never die.

The Shaw's production values are always first rate and this one was no exception. The casting of Holmes and Watson, and the chemistry between them, was excellent. The Bootmakers had a chance to chat with Damien Atkins before the October 13th performance and the man knows his Conan Doyle! The sets were imaginative, the effects were first class, and the puppet hound was suitably scary, though no more terrifying than any other hound that I can recall.

This was not the Shaw Festival's first venture into the world of Arthur Conan Doyle. William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* was produced in 1994, and ACD's one-act play, *Waterloo*, was presented twice, in 1998 and 1999, accompanied by the ACD Friends' publication, *Waterloo: A Case-book on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Historical Play*.

An add-on to the experience was the World War I Remembrance display on the wall above the Festival Theatre's main entrance. It ran from late September until November 11, in order to accommodate the names of more than 1,003,000 soldiers from the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, United States, Turkey, Belgium, Australia, Czech Republic, Ukraine, South Africa, Italy, New Zealand, Slovenia, China, and the British Indian Army who died in the war. The display is provided by *The World Remembers—Le Monde Se Souvient* (<https://www.theworldremembers.org/>), founded by The Friends' 2017 Holliyer lecturer, R.H. Thomson.

1. Remembered by the late Peter Calamai in "Tapping Around *The Hound*," *Baker Street Journal*, v. 67, no. 4, Winter 2017, p.42.







## THE LUMBER ROOM

# Some Recent Items Added to the Collection: Old & New

JESSIE AMAOLO

*Jessie Amaolo joined the Special Collections Department at the Toronto Reference Library in 2014, worked as curatorial locum in 2015, and became Curator of the ACD Collection in 2017.*

A large part of my job as curator of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection is to continuously add both new and rare materials to the Collection through purchases and donations. This year there are some notable acquisitions.

We recently purchased *The Lost World* by Arthur Conan Doyle, first published in eight issues of *The Strand Magazine* in 1912 by George Newnes in London, England. They contain the first adventure of Professor Challenger on the lost plateau in South America. This version features illustrations by well-known artist Harry Rowntree.



The Collection also acquired a miniature book version of "A Scandal in Bohemia." This beautiful, delicate, handcrafted edition was produced in a limited quantity of 13 signed books. It was designed, completed, and published by book artists Jarmila and Jelena Sobota, in Loket, Czech Republic, in 2015.

Another new addition is a post-production continuity and dialogue script for the Universal Pictures 1945 film, "Pursuit to Algiers," directed by Roy William Neill and starring Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson. The screenplay was written by Leonard Lee and is adapted from ACD's "The Adventure of the Red Circle."

It should also be mentioned that The Performing Arts Collection,



which shares a home with the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection in the Marilyn and Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre, recently purchased the costume designs by Dana Osborne for the 2018 Shaw Festival play *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, adapted by R. Hamilton Wright and David Pichette.

The Collection also received a generous donation

of ephemera related to Arthur Conan Doyle from Glen Miranker, past chair of the American branch of the Friends of the ACD Collection. The items include an original photograph of Conan Doyle from 1894 and advertising postcards for *The Lost World* and *Sir Nigel*. They were part of the Dan Posnansky Collection, purchased from the auction late last year.

In addition to these rare items, the TPL is constantly adding contemporary materials such as newly published fiction and non-fiction books, as well as research materials. This includes books produced by the Baker Street Irregulars including the recent *Mobile Holmes: Transportation in the Canon*, edited and introduced by Walter Jaffee (covering all of the modes of movement in the Canon: walking, horses, carriages, railroads, ships, bicycles, automobiles, and airplanes) and *Trenches: The War Service of Sherlock Holmes*, edited and introduced by Robert Katz and Andrew Solberg (featuring a facsimile of the partial manuscript of "His Last Bow" by Arthur Conan Doyle as well as annotations and commentary on the story).

These are just a few of the many interesting and invaluable materials acquired this year to augment the ACD Collection.







## THE GREEN SETTEE

# The Enigma of Arthur Conan Doyle: “SinS” Revisited

DONNY ZALDIN

*Donny Zaldin, BSI, ASH, MBt, ETP has served The Bootmakers of Toronto in many leadership roles, and contributed for over a quarter century as author and editor to Canadian and international Sherlockian and Doylean scholarship, including as co-editor of Magic Door.*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was multifaceted—“steel true, blade straight, patriot, physician and man of letters”—the apt inscription on his tombstone in his final (?) resting place in the cemetery at All Saints Church, Minstead, England. In the almost nine decades since ACD’s death, other appropriate epithets have been bestowed upon him, including spiritualist and justice advocate.



Notwithstanding the propriety and dignity with which he always carried himself, the life and career of ACD, who openly stated his opinion on virtually every newsworthy topic, were rife with controversy, much of which he either created or with which he was associated.

These controversies were the theme of an international Sherlockian conference held in Toronto October 13-16, 2011, titled “SinS,” an acronym for “A Study in Scandal.” The symposium was chaired by Barbara Rusch, who assured the more than 100 attendees in her opening remarks, “We come to praise ACD, not to bury him.”

Presentations included scholarship on the following Victorian/Doylean topics: the prevailing Victorian culture of scandal, immorality, pornography and prostitution, the Jack the Ripper murders, the scandal-mongering press, Jean Leckie’s disreputable antecedents, Spiritualism, the Cottingley Fairies, Harry Houdini, Olympian Dorando Pietri, George Edalji, Oscar Slater, and Roger Casement.

ACD’s controversial forays were addressed by Barbara Rusch as the conference drew to a close:

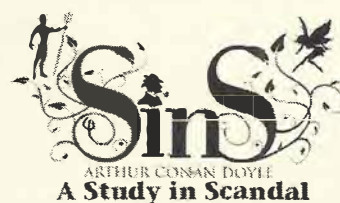
Whether ACD’s reputation as a magnet for scandal is well earned, whether he has been exonerated, whether his naïveté and discretions outweigh his considerable accomplishments—may not be for us to judge. But perhaps one who speaks with more authority on the subject is Christopher Morley, writer, editor, critic and founder of the Baker Street Irregulars who believed that ‘it was ridiculous that Conan Doyle was only knighted... he should have been sainted.’ Although not quite a saint, he was certainly a man of great vision, compassion and energy—a true Renaissance man. And so, let us forgive him his peccadilloes, his excuses and occasional slip-ups. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—‘steel true, blade straight’—a man of his time and for all time, with a big heart and an even bigger genius. To those of us who pay tribute to his name, his reputation will never tarnish but will forever shine. And I leave the last word on the subject to Christopher Morley, who wrote: ‘What opiate can best abate anxiety and toil? / Not aspirins or treble gins nor laud or mineral oil. / My only drug is a good long slug of tincture of Conan Doyle.’

Following the advice of William Shakespeare: “*The play’s the thing to uncover the conscience of the king*” (*Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2), the concluding and crowning event of the conference was a play written by Barbara Rusch, titled *The Crossing or Three Authors in Search of a Character*. In it, three legendary figures with whom Conan Doyle was inextricably linked, Oscar Wilde, Edgar Allan Poe and Harry Houdini, each enacted in a mesmerizing portrayal by Canadian playwright, director and actor John Huston, gather together in the afterlife on July 7, 1930 for some unknown purpose. The three giant egos critique their own and each other’s lives and speculate on the purpose of their meeting until they finally discover their mission and determine how it is to be accomplished.

Since 2011, Barbara has worked, on and off, developing, revising and expanding her play to include two additional seminal characters.

The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection and the Toronto Public Library are publishing Barbara’s revised, updated play.

Membership in the Friends includes a bound copy of the play along with this issue of *Magic Door*. Non-members may purchase copies of the play, and members additional copies, from Donny Zaldin (donaldzaldin@rogers.com).





# A Purchase From the Dan Posnansky Auction

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The auction catalogue dated these letters as written in 1903. So what do they have to do with the earlier novels *A Duet* or *Hilda Wade*? The short answer is “a little.” I believe the first one relates to a payment of royalties for *A Duet*, while the second refers to Conan Doyle’s sister’s book that he persuaded Grant Richards to publish.

Bryan Mary Julia Josephine Doyle (1877-1927), known affectionately by the family as Dodo, was the youngest of ACD’s siblings. She married the Reverend Charles Cyril Angell and they lived in Oxfordshire and had a son, Branford Bryan Angell. Her published literary output consists of two novels: *The Episodes of Marge: Memoirs of a Humble Adventuress* (Grant Richards, 1903) and *The Secret of the Moor Cottage* (Small, Maynard and Company, 1906), and a book of poetry. Both novels were published under her alias, H. Ripley Crommarsh. A volume of poetry, *At the Waters of Strife* (1918), appeared under her own name.

The letters, taken by themselves, lead to the natural assumption that they are somehow related to *A Duet*, but some internet sleuthing uncovers another two letters from the author to Grant Richards in March of 1903. They are both from the Collection of Brian Pugh and they put the ACD Collection’s acquisition in a clearer context. The first is dated March 18. Conan Doyle writes to Richards from The Limes, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, where he was visiting his sister. ACD is answering a note from Richards to Bryan Mary. Conan Doyle mentions a contract and that the terms would do very well. He asks that the book be issued as soon as possible. It was published by Richards in July. “Also I should like an assurance from you that you will really give it a good show in the advertising line.” Daniel Stashower writes in *Teller of Tales* that ACD made Richards promise £100 for the promotion of *A Duet With Occasional Chorus*. ACD would not expect that much money to be spent on his sister’s book (as we see in the March 25th letter). He hoped in giving his novel to Richards that a smaller firm with fewer books would be able to give each project more attention than a larger company could.

In dealing with Richards, Conan Doyle displays the protective attitude of a big brother, using his knowledge of the publishing industry to be a tough and experienced bargainer for his sister. He mentions that Bryan Mary would, of course, retain the rights to any possible future serialization and notes that she was using a *nom de plume*. He then graciously offered, “I should have no objection however when the time comes for issuing the book that the critics and public should know that H. Ripley Crommarsh is my youngest sister.” He finishes by advising Richards to send the agreement along.

The second letter from ACD to Richards in the Brian Pugh Collection was written from Hindhead, and is dated March 25. It begins, “I think the choice of title is a very good one [*The Episodes of Marge: Memoirs of a Humble Adventuress*]. I remember that you wanted to alter ‘A Duet’ alas I don’t think in either case there was anything amiss.” ACD also mentions that it has been a long time since he received royalty payments for *A Duet*.

He goes on:

I should be glad if I could protect the American Rights of my sister’s book. Could you do that in any way? If not we might get an advanced set of proofs and I would try if we could get McClure to do it over there.

£20 seems a very small sum in advertising. I should have thought you might put a bit more into it.

I have marked two clauses in the agreement which seem to me to be unfair.

At this point ACD seems to have recovered from his regret for the financial hardship *A Duet* caused the fledgling publishing company and continues trying to make a good deal for Bryan Mary.

It looks like the two letters in the ACD Collection were written after the two in the Brian Pugh Collection and add some information to the publishing history of *The Episodes of Marge* and *A Duet with Occasional Chorus*.

Research on the letters from Lot 16 led me to read an obscure Edwardian novel in the TPL Special Collections room. I was amazed that the ACD Collection had a copy of the rare *Episodes of Marge* and also at the unexpected direction delving into these letters had taken me. It was with some reservations that I undertook to read this book as I am not a fan of Conan Doyle’s novels. How good could a first attempt by his baby sister be? As it turns out, the story, while not great literature, is not bad reading either. “Art in the blood,” as ACD might say.

As this novel is not widely known, or easily found, and relates to the letters from Lot 16, I am including a synopsis of the plot. Warning: there are spoilers.

Our heroine is an adventuress with a heart of gold. Marge is attractive, popular, quick-witted and resourceful. However, she chooses to use her gifts to take advantage of people and situations for amusement or profit. Her morality is such that she usually only steals from people she doesn’t like or who mistreat her. “Margery Nicol was an incorrigible from the earliest years of her life; and a sore trial to teachers, spiritual pastors and masters, and all right-thinking people with whom she came in contact.”

Margery was born in a remote Cumberland village. Her father, Isaac, was a good-for-nothing drunk and bully who was feared and avoided by the local constabulary. He doted on his only child, when she behaved as he wished. Marge inherited her instincts for vice from Isaac, but unlike him she could be kind and good-tempered. Her mother was a quiet, meek and long-suffering woman who supported the family as a cleaning lady. Margery felt that with a different husband her mother could have been a good parent, but in their family she was hopelessly ineffectual. As Marge’s father was the ruler of the home, the young girl sought his favour over her mother’s.

She left school at fourteen and her mother urged her to get a job to help with the family finances, but her father, who enjoyed her company, overruled his wife and kept his daughter at home. For pocket money, Margery stole from the meager house funds. One winter the Nicol family was short on fuel and cash and Marge devised a plan to steal coal from the schoolmaster. Disguised as a boy, she took small amounts of fuel each night, revelling in her cleverness (and the freedom of men’s clothing) until one night she was caught. The schoolmaster promised not to expose the theft if she went away and gave up her life of crime. Marge made an excuse to her parents and moved to Carlisle to become a milliner’s apprentice. She gained both knowledge and polish while in the employ of Mrs. Wright, the widow of a bank clerk. Marge enjoyed her job and liked her employer. She worked hard, learned well, and never took advantage of Mrs. Wright, who treated



the young girl well. It seemed as if Margery was set, but this wholesome existence left her bored, restless, and unsatisfied. Her wild, lawless side was starving and she yearned for a life of excitement and adventure. Marge felt that she excelled at being a criminal and that it was her true calling.

By chance she met Jim Carey, a livery stable driver, who fell victim to one of her schemes. He admired her skills and tracked her down to invite her to join his small gang of con artists, which included his mother and his friend Jefferson Leigh, a lawyer's clerk. Margery signed on with pleasure and went to live with them, posing as their maid. Over time they became like a family, as together they planned and executed various clever schemes. This new life suited Margery to a T, except that she fell in love with Jeff and was devastated when he was falsely accused of murder, convicted, and sentenced to transportation.

After that, Marge left her partners in crime, and moved to London to begin an honest life. She made friends and became popular in an artistic social circle, all the while growing kinder and softer, because she had been touched by love. Eventually, Margery found proof of Jefferson's innocence and he was released from jail, though the two did not find bliss in a happy, romantic ending.

Neither was there a happy ending for the larger story of Arthur Conan Doyle's involvement in getting his sister's book published. Andrew Lycett writes in his biography of Conan Doyle that *The Episodes of Marge* was another financial failure for Grant Richards and ACD ended up buying half the copies. The company went bankrupt in 1905, and it is likely that the unsuccessful ACD-related projects were a factor. Later that year, Richards restarted the company as E. Grant Richards ("E" was his wife's initial), but the firm was insolvent again by 1926.

As a final note, *The Episodes of Marge*, qualifies as an example of the New Woman genre, popular from the late 1800s until the First World War. These books were generally written by women, for women, and featured a strong, intelligent, and self-supporting heroine. They were a by-product of the early advent of feminism and the fight for women's rights, and Bryan Mary's book certainly captures the spirit of the movement.

This novel inspired a few thoughts and questions for me. Why did the wife of a minister write a story with a criminal heroine? Though in the end Marge is redeemed by love, she revels in being immoral for most of the book. How much did Bryan Mary learn about writing from her brother? One lesson she did learn was the use of episodes. This device makes the novel easy to serialize—an important consideration in that era. What did ACD think about the quality of her writing? Did he offer her writing advice? Margery and Bryan Mary both had alcoholic fathers. Was that a coincidence or autobiographical? Did Bryan Mary use the pen name H. Ripley Cromarsh because: she wanted to distance herself from her famous brother; she was the wife of a minister; she was a woman—or a combination of these? Why did she choose that particular pen name? While some of the mysteries surrounding Lot 16 have been solved, we may never know the answers to these and other questions, such as: what was Grant Richards' English Experiment and why did it require £3000?

The purchase of these letters led me on an adventure, that while not as exciting as Marge's, was interesting all the same.

For more information on the relationship between Conan Doyle and Grant Allen, see the late Peter Calamai's article "Grant Allen and Arthur Conan Doyle: A Victorian Odd Couple" (Magic Door 11:2, Autumn 2008 and 11:3,

Spring 2009). Richard Sveum wrote about A Duet with Occasional Chorus in "Beyond Sherlock Holmes" in Magic Door 17:2, Spring 2016.

For a report on Dan Posnansky's 2004 visit to Toronto to speak to the Friends about collecting, see Karen Campbell's "Dan Posnansky Brings Holmes Home" (Magic Door 7:3, Winter 2005).

Thanks to Brian Pugh for permission to quote from the letters in his collection. His generous sharing of the results of his research proved extremely helpful for this article. Images and transcripts of the two letters from his Collection, along with the two from the ACD Collection, may be found on his informative website, The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia: [www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php](http://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php)

## The White Company

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behaviour... expressed in two words: knightly honour."<sup>9</sup>

Author Peter Glassman suggests:

Edricson is the young ACD who admired art yet took quickly to physical activities. Hordle John is Doyle while in school: a large young man who took pride in his prowess in athletics and held his mother in high regard. In Samkin Aylward we find Doyle the man of action, who as a young doctor earned the respect of a ship's crew by blackening the eye of the steward on the fourth day at sea. And finally, Sir Nigel Loring is Doyle as he strove to be—a chivalrous knight.<sup>10</sup>

"A Scandal in Bohemia" appeared in July of that same year, so this publication occurred in concert with the soaring popularity of Sherlock Holmes. Yet it is possible that Conan Doyle would be more pleased to learn of scion societies named "Five Roses Gules on a Field Argent" or "The Socmen of Minstead," dedicated to keeping green his stories of chivalry and honour rather than "The Bootmakers of Toronto" or "The Baker Street Irregulars" doing as much for the memory of Sherlock Holmes.

So they lived, these men, in their own lusty, cheery fashion—rude and rough, but honest, kindly, and true. Let us thank God if we have outgrown their vices. Let us pray to God that we may ever hold their virtues.<sup>11</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Telegram sent by ACD from Undershaw to unnamed correspondent, from the ACD Collection, Toronto Public Library.
2. Marsha Perry, (2018). "The White Company" [Online]. Available: <https://www.conandoleinfo.com/doyles-work/the-white-company/> [2018, November].
3. Conan Doyle named his son Arthur Alleyne Kingsley Conan Doyle, born November 15, 1892, the year after *The White Company* was published.
4. Which was later to become the site of Sir Arthur's grave.
5. Arthur Conan Doyle, *The White Company* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005), p. 347.
6. Ibid., p. 88.
7. Ibid., pp. 155-156.
8. Letter dated September 25, 1892 from ACD to an unnamed correspondent, from the ACD Collection, Toronto Public Library.
9. John Dickson Carr, *The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 56.
10. Arthur Conan Doyle, *The White Company* (New York: William Morrow & Company Inc., 1988), p. 365.
11. Arthur Conan Doyle, *The White Company* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005), p. 414.







## CANON FODDER

# A Conversation with Colonel Hayter on the Reigate Squires Mystery

MARILYN PENNER

*Marilyn Penner, MBT is a long-time Bootmaker of Toronto and served as a Public Service Assistant in the Special Collections Department at the Toronto Reference Library. While working there from 2000 to her retirement in 2016, she had many opportunities to work with ACD material.*

Colonel Hayter related to me the circumstances leading up to his meeting the great detective: "I was delighted when my old friend Watson asked if Sherlock Holmes could share my hospitality and recuperate from his exertions in solving the Netherland-Sumatra Company

swindle. Watson had 'boomed Holmes handsomely' in the press, and I longed to meet him. Holmes was wan and listless when I welcomed them to my home. I dared not expect to see a demonstration of his famed deductive powers. Nevertheless I did hope and was rewarded with an 'adventure' of my own to brag about."

"Weren't you suspicious about the extraordinary assortment of 'loot' the burglars stole from Mr. Acton's library?" I asked, glancing at the story. "A volume of Pope's *Homer*, two plated candlesticks, an ivory letter weight, a small barometer, and ball of twine."

"I admit I thought it strange that they took the *Homer*. Our thieves tend to be poachers or menials. The twine would have been useful, as would the barometer, and the other objects pretty, but what use would men barely able to read a newspaper have with *Homer*? And if they broke in to obtain money, why burden their escape with impedimenta?"

"Didn't you suspect the Cunninghams?" I asked. "They were the squires of course and your neighbours, but there was a property dispute and they had a motive to search Acton's house for papers."

The Colonel raised his eyebrows. "They were gentlemen, Madam! One does not suspect gentlemen one knows of committing crime. Not a J.P. anyway. They are supposed to judge ill-doers, not do ill themselves." He shook his head. "It's still hard to believe. What rogues greed and desperation make of honest men!"

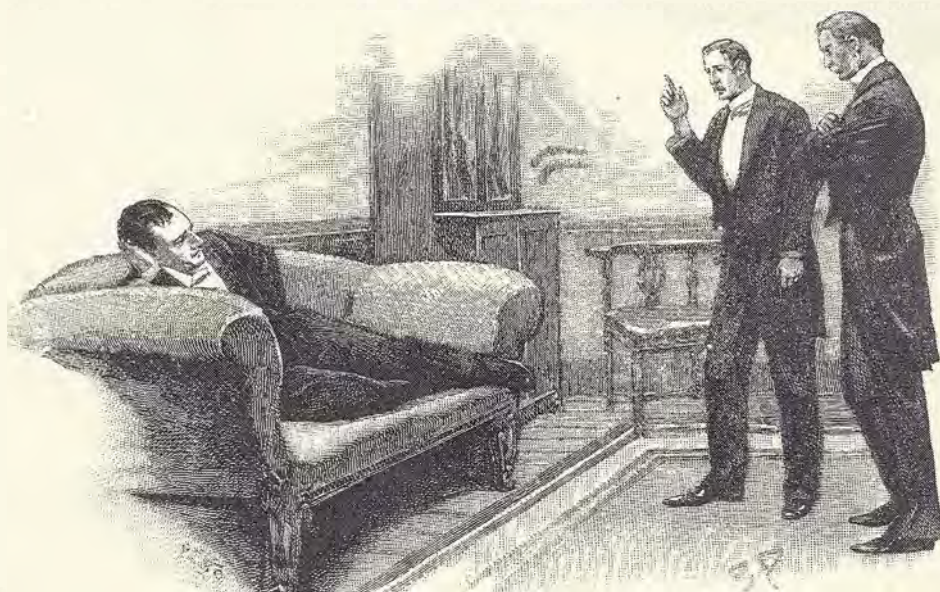
I leaned forward. "What did you think of

Sherlock Holmes's methods?"

"What the police inspector thought at first: that there was 'madness in his method.' Holmes certainly appeared to push his strength beyond reason. I also thought that he wished to prove to Watson that he was on the mend, and to me that Watson had not exaggerated his abilities. Watson is a faithful but fussy dog, especially when they are his friends and patients. Holmes often looked a tad irritated by his fussing, though glad for his friendship."

"Yet I was impressed—greatly impressed—when I saw that Holmes was right about the Cunninghams and their malevolence. Never to my knowledge did a man so risk his health to catch two men out. I was even more impressed by Holmes reasoning it out so thoroughly and so quickly in his weakened condition. I'm still impressed by his timely fit to distract the inspector from speaking about the torn note in Will Kirwan's hand. I thought I was a quick thinker, an army officer has to be, especially in the Afghanistan campaign. I'm not lacking in wit since, but that instant fit was masterly."

"But it is amazing how prejudice can blind a man," he continued. "I'm an honest man, and I expected fellows in my station—neighbours, county men, men with whom I have dined—to be as honest as myself. I did not think that a Justice of the Peace would stoop to burglary, and his son to commit murder. I thought William Kirwan a likely thief, merely because he was the coachman, and had received a message from the burglars. That girl, Annie Morrison, who was mentioned in the note, I wonder if perhaps Kirwan wanted young Cunningham to leave her alone. Who knows? However, I was wrong about Kirwan's being the thief and I owe his shade an apology."



Holmes, Watson and Colonel Hayter. 1893 illustration by Sidney Paget

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