

The Adventure of the ~~Blue~~ Lodger

"Well, Mr. Warren, I cannot see that you have any particular cause for uneasiness, nor do I understand why I, whose time is of some value, should interfere in the matter. I really have other things to engage me". So spoke Sherlock Holmes, and turned back to the great scrap book in which he was arranging and indexing some of his recent material.

But the land lady had the pertinacity, and also the cunning of her sex. She held her ground firmly.

"You arranged an affair for a lodger of mine last year" she said "Mr. Fairdale Hobbs"

"Ah yes - a simple matter"

"But he would never cease talking of it - your kindness, sir, and the way in which you brought light into the darkness. I remembered his words when I was in doubt and darkness myself. I know you could if you only would"

Holmes was accessible upon the side of flattery, and also to do him justice upon the side of humbleness. The two forces made him lay down his gum-brush with a sigh of resignation and push back his chair.

"Well, well, Mr. Warren, let us hear about it then. You don't object to tobacco, I take it. Thank you, Watson - the matches! You are uneasy, as I understand, because your new lodger remains in his room and you cannot see him. Why, bless you, Mr. Warren, if I were your lodger you often would not see me for weeks on end."

"No doubt, sir, but this is different. It frightens me, Mr. Holmes. I can't sleep for fright. To hear his quick step moving here and moving there from east

Helen Wesson:

The Case of the UNIQUE ACCOMPLICE



WITH ALL DUE RESPECT to my very dear friend, Sherlock Holmes, he does have one habit which makes housekeeping rather frustrating for Mrs. Hudson. Holmes is a compulsive clipping collector. He rarely ever reads the daily papers without tearing out at least one item for his files. Since he has too great a respect for books and periodicals to mutilate them this way, there are piles here and there of such magazines, brochures and tomes, retained for perhaps only a sentence or a paragraph if not a complete article.

I might also add that though I keep my medical files with the meticulous precision I learned in medical school and early practice, still my secretary or nurse may perchance mislay a folder--though only momentarily, I assure you. However, this never happens to Holmes. He has his own filing system--if one may call it that--retaining certain categories for longer than I have known him.

It was Holmes' belief that one should not clutter up one's mental attic, yet each fact must be retained "in the lumberyard," he'd say, of a library or files. Thus his ponderous files, which overflowed onto every horizontal surface at times. However, I have yet to see it happen that he wanted some snip of paper without being able to reach out, where he knew it was (how I don't even conjecture) and find it at hand.

Thus it was one evening when we were quietly reading, I the newest Strand Magazine (proofreading after the fact, you might say), and Holmes the day's newspapers which he had been too busy that day to peruse as he usually does, in the morning.

"HMM," he mused. "Interesting..."

He read on. Then, laying the paper aside, he went over to the sideboard which he had converted into one of his filing systems, and opened that side which I knew pertained to the Orient. His interest in the Orient was really an absorption, you might say, and so the files were cross-referenced not only as to countries, but also such categories as Religions, Folklore and Beliefs; Politics and Economics; even Festivals and Cultural Arts.

"Yes," he muttered to himself. "Yes, it can be done and not as far-fetched as it seems, given the fortuitous juxtaposition of circumstances."

"All right, Holmes," I laid aside my magazine, "you have piqued my attention. What is this all about?"

"My dear Watson." He sprang up from the wicker chair which better suits his lean frame than mine, and paced the room. "We have here probably the most ingenious robbery I have ever come across--with certainly the most unusual accomplice in history."

"Is that what the article says?"

"Of course not, Watson. The article merely states that it is still a complete mystery, which means we must act fast before the gem is cut, destroying a historic heirloom as well."

"Holmes, would you mind beginning at the beginning. You have left me at the starting gate, as 'twere, and blindfolded."

"Sorry, old fellow. Yes, my mind had raced ahead. Even now, I am but neck and neck, to continue your analogy, but the other does no' even know the race is not yet his!"

"This article, not even on the front page, mind you, states that while visiting the pleasant places of Florida, in the United States, Lord and Lady Horeham-Worley suffered the loss of the famous Horeham diamond.

"Lady Horeham wore it as a pendant constantly despite every warning...said she might as well enjoy it while she's alive. Her daughter married out of her class, you'll remember, and their only son and heir is a great disappointment to them. In fact, but for his bloodline and birth-right, one would call him a full-fledged scoundrel though he has only barely reached manhood."

"Yes, I do remember certain references to him here and there," I replied. "Sounds like the makings of a remittance man, banished to Australia or some foreign place."

"Exactly, Watson. Doesn't it seem strange to you that though he was expelled from Oxford, his parents gave him the Grand Tour as though he had graduated with honors? Only in his case it was a tour of the Orient, where his scandalous behavior is less likely to embarrass the family than in Europe."

"On the other hand, they are partial to traveling, the whole family. You say they are in America now?"

"They were when this was published, he indicated the newspaper. "Let us hope they still are. Young Horeham-Worley is with them. In fact, the article states they were on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico at his invitation. That might mean he knew that as parents they were ever hopeful for reformation and reconciliation, Lady Horeham-Worley especially. You know how mothers are."

"Yes, for a sensitive, feeling woman, hope would overwhelm disappointment, even bitterness..."

Holmes interrupted me in his peremptory manner. "These are the circumstances, Watson. Let us see what you make of them before I expound my theory. It is a fantastic theory, Watson, but not beyond the ingenuity of a well-traveled man who makes his own opportunities."

He snipped the article from the newspaper and placed it on the only surface left, the tabouret table from which Mrs. Hudson had removed the tea tray but minutes ago. He studied the clipping for a moment before he spoke again.

"The correspondent in America quite apparently gets paid by the word. Every possible fact he knows is included in detail. Yet I should judge him to be conscientious and accurate since there is no unnecessary verbiage nor flowery passages--"padding," I believe is the trade term. Therefore, I trust we can judge by the facts here, which are..."

He mumbled to himself, raising his voice as he reported to me a slightly edited version.

"Lord and Lady Horeham-Worley were enjoying the charming climate of Florida... Actually, hmmm, there was a business motive for the trip. Seems that about 1884, land became available free to homesteaders if one settled on it to meet certain requirements. Young Horeham-Worley had decided to homestead on a wild island in the Gulf of Mexico, very close to the mainland--a key, they call it. He had built a log cabin to meet homesteading requirements.

"He had written his parents about his achievements and his life. They could not resist the temptation of seeing deer and screaming panthers...tasting turtle eggs, about which, it says here, 'no matter how long they are cooked, they remain soft-boiled.' That would not tempt me, but the pompano and mullet, fish fresh from the Gulf of Mexico, must be sweet and delicious. However..."

"Ahh, young Horeham-Worley also wished to buy into the tobacco business which is just getting underway in a nearby city called Tampa...cigars... Yes, I can see several logical reasons for Lord and Lady Horeham-Worley to make the trip.

"Must have its drawbacks, though...Lady Horeham-Worley was wearing heavy veiling against the "black clouds of mosquitoes."

"How do you know that?"

"In due course, Watson. It's right here in perfectly clear English. but I read it in another context. Yes," he pointed the stem of his pipe for emphasis. "I'd revise this news story, but I must check further."

He rifled through two volumes of an encyclopedic nature, then drew from his Orient file--subtitle: Japan--a lengthy clipping which he studied intently, referring at times to a

thin volume also from the Japan file.

"The day of the loss, the family had picnicked on a white beach while Lady Horeham-Worley made notes on the many varieties of birds native to that more tropical climate. Her interest reminded her son of the latest beach-combing diversion. Seems a baby pelican, he called it, had "adopted" a boat and refused to leave. Boats are the only means to the mainland but this one is not now in use.

"Lady Horeham-Worley remembers that she was wearing the diamond on a chain around her neck, as she always does. Her son confirmed this as he noticed it when he helped her tie on additional veiling against the clouds of mosquitoes which infest the island.

"They visited the young pelican which, locally, had already acquired a name, Hester."

"Why Hester, Holmes?"

"Irrelevant. What is relevant is that it was thriving on the amazing quantity of fish it needs each day, which was supplemented by its human admirers. Apparently it is not often that a pelican adopts humans. Even young Horeham-Worley made his contribution to the pelican's diet, to the delight of his mother and the amazement, no doubt, of his father.

"There, Watson, you have now what I promised you--the most unusual accomplice in criminal history."

"Who?" I was somewhat startled. He had mentioned nobody but the Horeham-Worleys. Young H-W, yes, but "who...?"

"The baby pelican, Watson. The baby pelican, which is not a pelican at all."

"Not a pelican? Surely it could not be a sea gull!"

"No, my dear fellow. Not a pelican. Not a sea gull.

"Hester is a cormorant. One of the trained cormorants of Gifu, Japan."

"Trained cormorant?"

"Yes, slightly smaller than a pelican, the Japanese cormorants are trained strenuously for years to fish for their masters. Here," he waved to a lengthy clipping, "is an account of travelers who visited Gifu and were entertained by watching the cormorants fish.

"The cormorant masters set them out on tethers at night, by torchlight from the boats. On other boats, strung with the delicate lanterns characteristic of Gifu, people are entertained by geisha with food and drink. With the decoy fires blazing it must be colorful and festive, indeed."

"But surely...then the cormorants do not eat fish, as I seem to recall pelicans do? Surely they'd eat more than they'd catch for their masters."

"Ah, old friend. That is the crux of the matter. The cormorants fish with cords tied around their necks so only the tiniest fish slip down their throats."

"You are saying that...?"

"Yes, on his travels, young Horeham-Worley visited Gifu. Perhaps he read the same article as I have here. He is clever--the family runs to brains.



"Watson, we must waste no time. See that a cablegram is sent to New York to be relayed to the authorities in this large city nearby, Tampa. Tell them to hold Horeham-Worley and search his property again. No need to involve Hester, but the ring must be removed from her neck if that young blaggard forgot.

"I always say, Watson, that a criminal will make one slip. When young Horeham-Worley confirmed the presence of the diamond that day, when he helped his mother tie on her veiling, he also revealed how he removed the diamond unnoticed.

"Naturally he did not dare have it found on him when the loss was discovered, a discovery he may have precipitated himself, since I have no idea how long that cormorant may hold the fish."

"The fish? How you do jump around, Holmes. What fish?"

"Young Horeham-Worley fed Hester a fish, to amuse his mother. Into that fish he had forced the diamond. He had probably practiced it well beforehand. The cormorant, of course, had been well-trained for its role."

"Holmes, I always say, you are remarkable!"

"The cablegram, Watson. It must be sent as quickly as the sending office can be reached. Sign it 'Sherlock Holmes'.

"Oh, and Watson, inquire if Horeham-Worley has a Japanese man in the log cabin."

IN DUE COURSE, we received the results of Sherlock Holmes' deductions made from his chaotic filing system--and his even more amazing reasoning powers. The diamond was found on the boat Hester "adopted" and which had been bought, incidentally, by young Horeham-Worley.

And yes, he had had a Japanese man, but the man had been old and very ill when they had arrived apparently too late for the climate to effect a cure.

"Hester's master," murmured Holmes. "An honorable man. For over a thousand years, only six clans have been permitted by tradition and law to inherit the distinction of training cormorants. Just as well he never knew why Horeham-Worley was so generous with his invitation to the charming climate of Florida."

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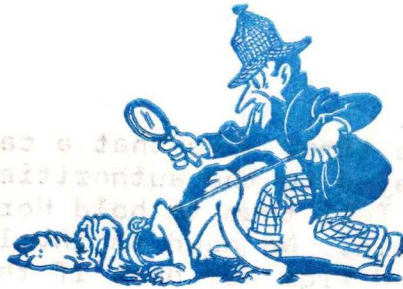


THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF ADELAIDE (The Investigator Straights) of South Australia, with which the international TRAINED CORMORANTS OF GIFU is very, very loosely affiliated, deserves an apology somewhere somehow. Let me assure the ethnically sensitive that if I know my Australians, they will glee at the reference!

This Sherlockian zine is published for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association; some members of The Red Circle of Washington, DC; some participants in Bouchercon XI '80; exchanges with other scion societies of The Baker Street Irregulars and foreign societies; and contributors. --HW



Poor Fish



TRAINED CORMORANTS OF GIFU

Scion Society of the
Baker Street Irregulars

An International society of readers of Sherlock Holmes who have participated in the rites of Cormorant fishing at Gifu, Japan. No dues, no rules -- just eclat. You are invited. CORMORANTS are those who have filled this qualification; those still interested but without hope of fulfilling this qualification may become TORCHBEARERS by researching the location of Gifu and the allusion in the Canon, like Chuck Hansen of The Neglected Patients of Dr. Watson and its spin-off, The Outpatients

Lighthouses seem to become extinct except in oil paintings and new network. Politicians we have in wild abundance. The Trained Cormorant of Gifu has been a tradition in Japan for more than 1200 years. I don't think any other Trained Cormorant can make that claim. This allusion is another clue to Holmes' connection with the Orient. He had his reasons for not telling Watson, or perhaps the fog of mystery will gradually dissipate and we shall learn the full story, bit by bit.

THREE SCION SOCIETIES are mentioned in "The Unique Accomplice." H-W is one, for the puzzled. That little society, also international, is confined to Sherlockians with the initials HW, and has amazingly increased its membership by 50%.

THE SILVER BLAZE held its 10th running in May at Pimlico. (The original running of the Silver Blaze took place in April, 1952, at Jamaica Race Course on Lond Island.) I think its a Fun day because I won \$15 and \$10, respectively, the two times we've attended--the \$2 window, of course!

POOR FISH (and he wants no mental association with the mimeography!) is also the self-proclaimed Poet Laureate of the Silver Blaze event. From CORMORANT Sheldon Wesson:

Here's to the Horse with the space on his face,
Who, foully disguised, nonetheless won the race.
Here's to the Dog, who did nought in the night,
Whose silence itself shed light on the site.
Here's to the Sleuth, who followed the trace
Of logic to fasten the guilt in its place.
We toast not the outcome in spirits of wine,
But in smoother libations, in your glass and mine.
Together our hearts and our spirits we raise:
Race on! Win forever, belov'd Silver Blaze!

George T. Wetzel: The Case of



M. Vidocq

A FOREWORD by Way of Explanation

Having been appointed literary executor by the heirs of the estate of the late John H. Watson, M.D., some years ago, I had the enviable task of sorting through and cataloguing for possible publication certain papers of his, crammed into a travel-worn and battered tin dispatch box stored and forgotten for almost half a century in the vaults of the bank of Cox & Co. at Charing Cross.

Nearly all the papers, as I anticipated, were records of cases that the famous Sherlock Holmes had at various times been called to examine. Some were failures and hardly bore narrating since no final explanation or continuation was forthcoming.

Nevertheless, one such problem--in which the great detective was only tangentially involved--though without an apparent conclusion, struck me as so peculiar that I decided Dr. Watson's unfinished, rough manuscript merited publication.

Curiously enough, Prof. Moriarty, about whom this fragment is concerned, was born October 31, 1946--under the sign of Scorpio, the sign of great surgeons and great criminals.

MRS. HUDSON handed me the man's card. It read "C. Auguste Dupin - Private Detective." The name was familiar. Holmes had an interest in professional contemporaries as well as criminals and had once told me of him. Dupin was an eccentric, impoverished detective who rented a time-eaten and grotesque mansion in a Paris suburb, long deserted through superstitions; that Dupin would frequently close all the shutters during the day and light candles in the rooms to simulate the aspect of night.

When she ushered him up, I was struck by his melancholic, Poe-esque appearance.

Dupin stared silently around the customary litter of our rooms, the artifacts of cases, books and papers, the chemical

paraphernalia cluttering a table. Before he could sit down he had first to remove from his chair an open theatrical make-up case. I muttered apologies to him, explaining that among other things Holmes sporadically practiced disguises, an art he often used in penetrating the underworld.

"If you wish to see Sherlock Holmes," I began, "it is not possible at present. He is under the private care of a medical colleague of mine."

"I am aware of that."

"How did you know?"

"I am a detective."

"Then I suppose you also know the reason?"

"Partly."

"Then I suppose I may as well tell you the rest if I have your word as a gentleman it goes no further? Good, it is narcotics. I have repeatedly warned Holmes that their continual use involved tissue change and might leave a permanent weakness. What I once considered as untidiness in his personal habits and queer humours more than likely are symptoms of some mental deterioration. What normal man would sit in his arm chair and puncture the opposite wall with dozens of bullets in the form of a 'V.R.'; or keep pipe tobacco in the toe-end of a Persian slipper; or transfix unanswered correspondence atop the mantel with a jack-knife?

"But you know Holmes. When there was no mental excitement solving an obstruse cypher or a baffling crime, then he must seek substitute stimulation in morphine or cocaine. With the demise of Prof. James Moriarty, the greatest stimulus to his powers was removed and he sought it in narcotics... however, what may I personally do for you?"

"It is about Moriarty. You know Mr. Holmes was engaged in early 1891 by the French government on a matter of supreme importance. During the same time the paths of Mr. Holmes and Prof. Moriarty crossed several times. In 'The Final Problem' you never noted the correspondence."

"That is true. Strange I missed it."

"Do you recall later that year after Moriarty's death at Reichenbach Fall that letters appeared in the newspapers defending him, written by his brother, Colonel James Moriarty? Someone in the Bureau thought it odd that both the colonel and professor shared the same first name."

"I am ashamed to admit, Monsieur Dupin, that that, too, I overlooked. And I cannot say for sure if Holmes ever mentioned it."

"Though it is not improbable, Dr. Watson, if both brothers had different middle names. I have in a rare case or two

heard of it here in your country. Nevertheless, the Surete were suspicious and wondered if that colonel was not really the professor who through an aberrant blunder signed his own full name to the letters."

"Preposterous. The man is dead."

"Are you certain? There never was found a corpus delicti. Because further investigation necessitated going outside of France, the Surete hired me to ascertain whether any Colonel James Moriarty existed. Otherwise we were dealing with the professor again. I decided to question contemporaries of the professor. I came over to that Cotswold university where Mr. Holmes said the professor once held the Mathematics Chair. They never heard of him."

"Of course. He was compelled to resign his position there as the result of a scandal. Obviously they disclaimed association with a man who later became infamous."

"I shall let that pass for the moment. Afterwards I looked for anyone else who ever met the professor (or his brother). Mr. Holmes had but he was missing then and presumed dead. You never personally met Moriarty. Jailed members of his gang refused to cooperate."

"That left only Inspector MacDonald of Scotland Yard. He never knew of the colonel but he once met the professor in his London rooms, he told me. The professor sat during the interview with his face in the shadow with the lamp turned on the inspector's face. The lighting arrangement to me appears to have been to frustrate close scrutiny of the professor's face. There is absolutely no other explanation for it. I asked myself why. I could only conclude the man known as Prof. Moriarty was wearing a theatrical disguise, that unhampered vision might look unnatural and raise suspicion. In other words, Moriarty is a fiction, a character invented to fool police and criminals alike."

"Russish! Moriarty was a real person. When Holmes was a boy Moriarty tutored him."

"I am aware of Mr. Holmes' remarks to that effect."

"Moriarty also wrote two famous mathematical papers."

"Do you not believe, doctor, that a clever man, desiring to add credibility to such a masquerade might be expected to invent such details?"

I snorted at the Frenchman derisively.

"Mr. Holmes," he continued, "stated that everything comes in circles. That a study of the annals of crime is helpful for a policeman. I followed such advice. Have you ever heard of Mr. Vidocq?"

"Was he someone in a detective novel?"

"No, but he did write his 'Memoires' in 1828. In them he told how he was a Paris detective until he became disgraced. For reasons not quite clear to me he sometimes would disguise himself, go into the underworld, recruit a gang and have them commit a crime he planned. Then later as the police detective he would brilliantly solve his own intricate crime, arrest all the gang but the ringleader--himself--who could never be clearly indentified by the gang."

"What are you implying?"

"That Moriarty--like M. Vidocq--is very likely in reality to be someone on our side of the law--a policeman, a detective--who invented a fictitious Moriarty, and, wearing the disguise of that character, recruited criminals to execute his elaborately conceived crimes. You will note that like Vidocq, he never got caught."

"I suppose his motivation is other than money?"

"You obviously have read between the lines of some of my statements. The motivation? Perhaps the deductive ability of this mystery man was faltering for some reason. He may also have craved the mental stimulation that the challenge of a planned crime embodied."

"Your case is all assumptions, not deductions."

"No more than most of Mr. Holmes' cases."

"If that is all you have to say, Monsieur Dupin, then good day. I am a very busy man."

FINIS

RIDDLES:

The Identification Clue

Three little maids from school are we,
From New York University.
Our color adorns the varsity,
But circumstances make us flee.

The Resolution

The name we share betrays the way
Our lives are touched by dangers.
We and loved ones must avoid -- Sheldon
Encounters with sinister strangers. Wesson

The Facetious Nights of Straparola, translated and privately printed for members of the Society of Bibliophiles in 1901; 1,000 copies, No. 428:

Story Title Only

A proud and cruel maid I spied,
As through the entryway she hied.
Behind her trailed a lengthy train,
Upreared her head in high disdain,
And swiftly on her way she took,
And sharp her touch, and eke her look.
What though her tongue moves all around
She utters neither voice nor sound,
She is long, and thin, and wise,
He can tell her name who tries. (Venice, 1553 A.D.)

The Resolution

I resolve while on this earth
To give this cruel maid a wide berth. --HW

The last one walks upon the moor/ The last but one with firm-set
jaw/ To him four runners speed along/ Bearing a warrior huge and
strong/ Who would kill with stabs of fire/ While two loath to
see one expire/ Send forth first two, and again five/ Till the
warrior is no longer alive. The Resolution: Therefore on New
Year's I foreswore/ To walk upon no moor no more. --HW

I've never met Hillary
Waugh's brother. Waugh
said he had a mind
like mine...??

Delighted with settings and acting
of DRACULA, Pam, Princeton '76,
exclaimed: "Just think, if I didn't
have a weirdo like you for a mother,
I'd have missed all this!"

2nd International Congress of Crime Writers - March 13-18, 1978
Hotel Biltmore, New York

THE MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC. sponsored the event, with a
program rich in literal mirth and literary murder, merriment and
mayhem.

Details--quotes from panel discussions, speeches, person-
alities and gossip--will be transcribed from four days of Sony
tapes and published in the rear end of this zine so that it can
be continued till deadline, and then will probably overlap onto
next issue. (Free-lance work, highly unremunerative, nonetheless
receives Top Priority.)

Echoing the Sherlockian Red Circle's
"Silver Blaze" at Pimlico, the week started on Monday, March 13,
with "The Mystery Writers Stakes" at Aqueduct Race Track, or,
(a choice) the U. S. Coast Guard welcomed to its facility on
Governor's Island delegates who attended the Congress from Great
Britain, Sweden, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Norway, France, Denmark,
Israel, Canada and USA.

Monday evening, individual participation,
was a choice of "Murder By Design--The Graphics of Melodrama,"
hosted by Walter S. Gibson, creator of The Shadow; or just hanging
around. I chose to hang around as I did not relish being on the
streets of New York alone--I who trotted all over London After
Midnight, and Istanbul and Hong Kong after 10 p.m. when the shops
close.

In this way I met Jim Grady, youthful and sharp author of
"Six Days of the Condor" which starred Robert Redford when fore-
shortened to "Three Days..." Grady is an investigative reporter
for Jack Anderson, and a fellow-Washingtonian.

Tuesday: CLUE
game tournament, and Literary Agents Panel..Is the Police Pro-
cedural up or down? Is there a loss of interest in the private
Eye story? What's happening in Gothics? Police story neither on
the rise nor decline; the Gothic is on the decline, everybody is
overstocked on the medium-sized but the big ones naturally still
go, but (the Gothic) is generally on the decline.

The 10% commis-
sion was started in London in 1878 when a lawyer, A. T. Watt, was
writing contracts for writers. His friends in the advertising
business advised him to charge as they did, 10%, which he did.
Time is money, and the time an agent spends on any one author is
money. ((Overhead, etc. the whole sad story..)) Therefore, the
agent has to be more careful whom he represents these days than
in the old days, 30 years ago. Moratorium on Poets, therefore.

(I believe it was Christianna Brand who related how her first book received 15 rejections before it was published on the 16th try--and became a Best Seller. None of that these days, I gather.)

An author has to reach some stage in his career before anyone will pay any attention to him. Publicity is not going to attract attention to an author who is not yet worthy of that publicity. The real function of the agent is to match up publisher and author, and individual editors within the publishing house; the negotiation of contract, the follow-up on all of the business details and the management of a writing career. Only 4 or 5 out of a hundred writers prefer to do all that wheeling and dealing themselves, they enjoy it, and very often those authors should not have an agent, they can do it themselves.

Another male voice: ...about the publicity angle. A lot of authors have gotten a lot of publicity with their first book simply because they themselves have promoted what they were doing while they were writing it ((Nixon & Co.--HW)) or before they wrote it. There is a question/concerns all of us here that mystery writers talk about whenever they get together. Their books are better off if they are presented as genre works, if their books are presented with the label "Mystery" on them or simply as novels? Answer by Carl Brandt, Brandt & Brandt, Agent: I don't know if that can be answered. To label a book in the market by its genre is to give it at least a base market. Likely there are some who will read any mystery at all simply because that is their desire ((OH NO!)). On the other hand, there are readers who do not like genre but want to read "real novels" who might be turned off by that. ((Snoobs!))

Male voice: I wish to add something to what Perry said. (Perry Brown, Curtis Brown Ltd.) We spend more time making a \$50 commission than we do making a \$5,000 commission.

Audience: One of the things I've heard writers talk about among themselves is whether to pitch to the paperback market or the hardcover market. Is there any difference between what the paperback houses want and the hardcover houses want since so many deals today seem to be package deals between the two houses? What's the difference in advance that the author might receive?

Knox Burger, Knox Burger Associates: This is the most involved and endless question you could ask. Any mystery will do better if it's in boards first, any book. Paperback advances are still nowhere near, on an average, what paperback publishers pay for reprint rights on a hardcover book. That may not seem fair but it is a fact of life. It is changing somewhat. ..mysteries should be in hardcover first..commodity for television ..more respectability..have more weight..but quite a lot of money in paperback originals.

Audience: Since the gentlemen on this panel represent many authors each, I wonder if Mr. Morrison could tell us how mystery writers stack up in sales and earnings against other writers?

Henry Morrison, Inc.: Very poorly. I think it is ^{un}fortunate that most of you go under the tag of "Mystery Writers"

SHORT STORY and MAGAZINE EDITORS' PANEL: Edward D. Hoch, Moderator. Frederic Dannay, EQMM; Arnold Ehrlich, Atlantic Monthly; Vickie Haider, Playboy; Naome Lewis, Good Housekeeping.

...What they are looking for, what they buy, especially in the mystery/crime field... The Atlantic Monthly has in the past couple years published several crime stories, detective stories..(Ehrlich:)...the Atlantic policy.. it's a very flexible, open-ended publication which, after all, has been around for more than 130 years. Consequently, as with any magazine which has had a long life, editorial policies change with the editor-in-chief and his associates. As a sidebar, I suppose our most distinguished writer in the suspense/thriller field is Geoffrey Household. We have a new Geoffrey Household which arrived the other day and his editor is a young man of ^{limited} ~~limited~~ ^{talent} ~~talent~~ who used to be editor of Atlantic Monthly for years. We were discussing the title, which he (miss) didn't like the title. The book takes place in Hungary, and has to do with problems and travails of one Mr. Kovak. We all thought and finally the editor-in-chief said, "Why don't we call it 'The Couda Archipelago'?" (laughter) ...We don't have anybody come along in our press of the quality of Geoffrey Household, so we are certainly wide-open to writers of intelligent, quality stories. I just lost a book Monday to another publisher. We are certainly wide-open for mysteries, thrillers. I find this field congenial, though it is new for some of my colleagues, but I hope we see more and more of mss. of books. Since we are one of the very few houses who have both a book and a magazine publishers, what we really love is to introduce a writer in the magazine and then see him develop so that we can sign him up for novels. So keep us in mind as one of the really great outlets for that magazine-book combination. Very solid, very elegant, very well-dressed characters...(laughter)

(Hoch to Haider): I notice that Playboy has been using less short stories and going in for novelettes. I do know you have a Sherlockian story coming up in the May issue. (Haider:) We are doing a lot of novelettes but then I think we always have been..We are actively looking for short stories; in fact, I am in New York this week for that very purpose..want short stories..period of the late '20's, this is the genre that appeals to that group..superior quality, that is the only criterion that is important..We are looking for good mysteries.

(Hoch to Dannay:) What do you do when you get a story that doesn't seem to be quite in your field? (Dannay:) There is a difference between EQMM and the other magazines here. The other magazines publish occasional mystery stories and want other kinds of stories, too. The Queen magazine prints exclusively mystery stories and I think this is very distinctive. We print every kind of mystery story imaginable or written, and one of the principles of the magazine has been: To make every issue of the magazine as diversified as possible on the theory that we can't expect all readers to like all stories but we can expect all readers to like some stories. So, if occasionally the supernatural comes along that is written with great finesse and is unusual, we'll make an exception and publish that, or a horror story, or a pure mystery story. But mainly we are interested in detective and crime short stories, and here I agree with our panelists: quality is the first consideration, but we do want every type we can think of: pure deductive story, intuitional story, character study, usually procedural, the impossible crime--anything you write, we want to see.

Short Story/Magazine Panel-2

Lewis: At Good Housekeeping..we never gone in for detection. Our readers pick up and put down. I'll never forget when my ^{eldest} daughter first slept the night through and I got to read The New Yorker for the first time in two years. This is our audience. Romantic fiction is sweeping the readers across the board. To go back to short fiction, ^{we} seldom go more than 4,000 words. To create suspense, to pose the question and answer it, this takes space. "I'm afraid we don't put the emphasis on writing as the others do...We depend on a few people and most of them have died off..."

...Agents discourage ^{the writing of} short stories, yet we get covering letters that say, 'My agent doesn't handle short stories but should you should you wish to buy this piece...'

(Hoch:) Just how well have authors been able to work with editors? I know that Fred Dannay has been a great editor at working with an author and developing a story to the point that it is better than the author even imagined it to be.

(Dannay:) I guess you know when you finish reading a story that you either want it or you definitely do not want it, or there is the possibility of good or great prose there..If the author has not realized all the possibilities, you sit down and you ask yourself what can be done, structurally from the standpoint of substance or stylistically from the standpoint in which it is written. I am in the lucky position of having been and being a writer myself so perhaps I see things a little more closely than some of the other editors do. So we will work with the author if there is a potential of a good or great story might be through the medium of mail, or if I feel it is a complicated thing, I'll pick up the telephone, wherever the author may be, and talk about it in detail. The advantage of that is, the telephone gives you the advantage of give and take. You speak to the author and he can answer you. If you write a letter, you wait for the letter to be delivered before you can get an answer. I am glad to hear Ed (Hoch) say that we have improved stories lately, but the point is that we want every story to be at its highest possible notch, and we will work with authors.

(Haider:) We don't work with authors as much as EQMM, but I'd say in about 30% of the stories we publish, we have worked with the authors, either minor re-writes or additions or straightening up the plots, something like that. We receive a great many mss. and we are very short-handed; unless we wanted desperately the most incredible plot, or whatever, we like to print a story as the author sent it to us. It really has to be an exceptional piece or an incredible reason why we wanted it. We do edit to a certain extent. We don't usually work with the authors directly. Most of our material comes through an agent and we mostly go buy an agent, which is cumbersome at times, since it takes two or three days to contact an agent, and the agent has to contact the author. We do read unsolicited mss. if they are done free-lance by readers, but anybody who wants to send mss. to us should send it by his agent as it has a much better

because over the last few years the market has gone down and I think it is going to be even worse. If a mystery writer gets \$2500 or \$1500 advance and no paperback deal, he or she has a very dead book on his hands. It will look nice on the shelf because it sells to the libraries

and that's exactly where it is going to stop. I have had conversations with clients, non-clients, publishers. Everyone is saying sales are going down, there is nothing they can do to get the sales up. To raise the price of the book beyond \$6.95 or \$7.50 may mean the libraries cannot afford the books. Even people like M in Italy, where they are doing 4 to 6 books a month are getting desperate for sources. The authors are not writing the books. The authors are either dying out or going into Gothic, science-fiction, historical, even a few going into Westerns, God knows why. But the mystery novel stacks up as being the very small end of the tail that the publishing business wags. Every time someone does a really good mystery and there's either a smart writer, smart wife or smart agent, they take it out of the Mystery category and publish it as a real novel (four-color cover and all the etc's) that diminishes it as a mystery novel. When you have the category book that's left, it will be a 4,000 seller, then 3,000 after a few more years, no reprint and foreign sales off, and suddenly everyone is going to say that, in this country, the mystery novel is economically unfeasible.

Audience: I hear from beginning writers that they can't get an agent.. Agents just aren't interested in unpublished writers. Comments?

I'd say to check the literary market first in New York City for agents. There are 186 agents listed now and there are a great number not listed...

Audience: Do you take on authors who have never been published before if you like their work? Ans: Yes we take on authors and are open to authors whether they are published or not. Any agent is. Any agent who refuses is trying to avoid wasting time on the 99% of mss which are not worth their time to read. Any agent is after new talent.

There is one intelligent future which is to encourage new writers. One way to get in touch with them is to spread the word that you are interested in reading as long as the writer is serious about what he is doing. A lot of writers are concerned; they have stories to tell and don't know how to tell them. They don't have access to a teaching mechanism. And there are fewer writers today who are well-read. Most writers start by being readers. I get a lot of phone calls and letters from would-be writers who are not readers, and have no idea of what has gone on before. They don't read Agatha Christie because she's British. They don't read Leon Uris because he's best-selling. They don't read someone else because they are (sic) old-fashioned. Everybody wants to be successful immediately. The writers who are serious about it, who do want to work, can find agents. There are not many good, serious people who can go to the literary market directory, make phone calls, send in mss, who

Bob Silverberg will be amused.
I searched in vain for a St. Patrick's Day pin for Isaac Asimov: KISS ME-I'M IRISH
However, having had a heart attack recently, even at the Banquet he wore my pin:

YES, I MIND IF YOU SMOKE!

won't find an agent willing to work.

Aud: Literary agents come in all sizes but the best-known are the largest. In a large agency, different people represent different authors. The most experienced person in the office handles the best authors, but what about the others? What good does it do to have the best agency if the key man in that agency isn't representing you?

Ans: I don't think that's true. We all of us have particular people in our agencies who have particular strengths, and we try to match writers with the people in our office.

After further predictions of the decline and fall of the mystery novel, John Ball was recognized from the floor: Is there any future for the new publishers? We have quite a few in our area ((Los Angeles, California, etc)) They are starting up small houses, they are looking for good authors, the books do well, literally bringing back the Old Days. I'd like to know if there is any hope for this type of operation.

Yes. I don't think anyone is going to find the answer, or an answer, to reverse the trend of large book store chains stocking books with small potential. It has to be reversed and maybe the small publisher can do it since he can operate regionally, and not try to do the national thing to begin with. There is hope.

On that note of hope let's end the doomsaying for the nonce and skip to the climax of the week:

THE 33rd ANNUAL EDGAR ALLAN POE AWARDS DINNER

Table 46 was 'way out in left field. Had I been assigned by my previous editors, I'd have overcome this, but I decided to sit back for a change.

Hillary Waugh, besides being Chairman of the Program Committee, was also Edgar Allan Poe Awards Chairman, and when he commenced with (I paraphrase as the tape recorder was useless at that distance), "I shall always remember the opening lines..." (I muttered "Manderley" to my table mates rather emotionally)... "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." Grand Master status was conferred on Dame Daphne duMaurier, Dame Ngaio Marsh (overdue) and Dorothy B. Hughes.

Who is Dorothy B. Hughes that thou art mindful of her? I wondered. Much research by the Biography Section of WashDC's main library revealed that Hughes had been writing during the '40s and '50s when we were in Japan and her books are now out of print. She has made a comeback as the biographer of Erle Stanley Gardner.

Edward Gorey's DRACULA deservedly received a Special Award. His poster for the Congress should become a collector's item; and his poster for DRACULA I had autographed by Frank Langella.



Please jump to the rear, under EDGAR. Thank you.

(Ahrlich:) All of us are amateurs in this particular genre of writing and we either like it or don't like it, according to whatever idiosyncracies as editors we have. I wouldn't know how to tell an author how to rebuild a story. One either has to say this is a good story..and go with it. I don't myself have any experience at all; I daresay I wouldn't even know how to begin. Book-length mss are different; they show the flaws and the holes and the motivations, etc. Writers of the kind we publish probably wouldn't have the story submitted to us unless it were just what they wanted it to be. On the other hand, it occurs to me that we do have a device called the Atlantic Search (?) where I think we are in a marvelous position to publish short stories of mystery and science-fiction and suspense. It is on those writers that we stake our future. It is rather nice to be an amateur, I think, because you are pitting your own taste along with your audience... (He had prefaced his remarks with this foreword: Mr. Dannay sounds like the ideal editor, all that give and take on the telephone...)

(Lewis:) When it comes to whether or not we'd ask for revisions on a short story to make it (garbled in own laughter). We always try to insist that you just don't write an exercise in terror...

(Wesson:) Does BEAM work through agents, and how do you submit to the Dept. of First Stories?

(Dannay:) We definitely work through agents, through all of them, and the advantage of working through agents is this: You know it has already been screened, for quality and other points. So an agent's story is, in a sense, more likely to be good merchandise than what comes in the flush, but anything that comes in the flush--thousands and thousands of mss -- from budding authors, particularly, everything is read by our readers. Now, you do not have to say, 'This is for the Dept. of First Stories' although if you do say it it would help because a first story can be flawed to a certain degree but still pass muster because it has the Dept. of First Stories label attached to it.

MORE TO COME, including The Autopsy, as in Quincy.

Heroic Ruminations in Free Verse upon the running of the
SILVER BLAZE

O, noble, sturdy beast, whose equine beauties all observed:
We meet again to feast, to mark thy victory, so well deserved.
With pride, we now recall our Master at the race,
Who stripped the mask of vile deception from the whiteness of
thy face.

Behold, what crimes, what drugs, what knife
Were used to bar you from fulfillment of your life,
Without our Holmes, the Wessex Plate would perforce go
To Silas Brown, deceiver, brute, a churlish foe!

Isonomy, thy son fulfilled a father's glowing pride,
Through self-defense, and thus the bigamous Straker died.
'Twas all made clear when Holmes' genius cast the light:
The dog, he saw, the dog did nothing in the night.

--Sheldon Wesson

(Wesson wouldn't pay my blackmail fee not to print this!)

