



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

P.O. Box 232, Westmount Station
Westmount, QC, Canada H3Z 2T2

Founded 1979

Minutes of the Meeting of The Bimetallic Question June 6, 2019

Date of our next meeting: Thursday, August 1, 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 Abbey Grange*, prepared and presented by Carol Abramson

Next meeting's toast presenters: The Master: Wilfrid de Freitas; Dr Watson: Rachel Alkallay; *The Woman*, Irene Adler: Kristin Franseen; Mrs Hudson: David Dowse; The Society: Miyako Matsuda-Pelletier

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

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

Board: Sovereign: Bruno Paul Stenson, Treasurer: Paul Billette, Scribe: Kristin Franseen, Mrs. Hudson: Chris Herten-Greaven, Archivist: Susan Fitch, Telegraph Operator: Wilfrid de Freitas

Present: Carol Abramson, Rachel Alkallay, Paul Billette, David Cameron, Louise Corda, David Dowse, Frances Fister-Stoga, Kristin Franseen, Wilfrid de Freitas, Chris Herten-Greaven, Vivianne Lewis, Miyako Matsuda-Pelletier, Anne Millar, Elliott Newman, Erica Penner, Karl Raudsepp, David Reich, Bruno Paul Stenson, Ronnie Zilman

Regrets: Raf Jans, Mark Altosaar

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by our Sovereign Bruno Paul Stenson at 6:33pm.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION

1. Request

One of our members is looking for a larger print edition of the Canon. If you have an extra copy or a recommendation, please bring it to a future meeting.

2. Errata

Phil Ehrensaft was present at our April meeting and was mistakenly excluded from the list at the beginning of the minutes.

2. 40th Anniversary Plans (and beyond)!

- Our 40th anniversary brunch was held on Sunday, May 5, at the Terrasse St Ambroise. We enjoyed beautiful weather, shared memories from David and Wilfrid about the Society's founding, and a series of improvised toasts. Those who attended noted that, while the pub fare was not particularly ideal, the beer, weather, and location were excellent. Frances encouraged members to take the McAuslan brewery tour.
- Chris and Paul proposed possible locations and dates for our summer lamb roast, which those present voted on. We settled on noon on Sunday, August 11 near the P3 area of Cap-St-Jacques (a link to the map can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/yyo38klc>). Chris will provide the charcoal, equipment, and lamb, but we need additional volunteers to provide wood (preferably a dozen quarter-logs of hardwood), side dishes, and beverages. Members are also responsible for bringing chairs and/or blankets to sit on. Volunteer duties will be determined at the August meeting. Carol has already agreed to provide a cake for dessert.
- Karl is preparing a book of 40 toasts from across the Society's history. Please submit 2-3 of your favourite original toasts to him as Word files (.doc or .docx) by July 31.
- Bruno brought in the official 40th anniversary pins featuring the Society's logo. All current individual members will receive one pin, while those holding family memberships will receive two pins. Additional pins may be purchased for \$9 each.
- IMPORTANT NOTE: if you were not at the June meeting you will receive your pin either with your printed minutes, or under separate cover.

We are also holding a series of special events to take place throughout the year at meetings and our 2020 dinner. Our June meeting included a talk by Kristin on Victorian astronomical celebrity and the similarities between Astronomer Royal George Biddell Airy and Prof. James Moriarty (see Appendix 1).

Upcoming presentations will include:

- August: Anne on Holmes in film
- October: Raf on the *Hound of the Baskervilles*
- December: Karl on a surprise topic

3. New Business

Paul brought in an updated financial statement showing the Society account as holding \$1,644 from which \$600 has been withdrawn since that statement to cover the cost of the lapel pins.

4. Toast to the Master, by Elliott Newman

Elliott considered presence of Holmes in "homes":

Sherlock Holmes lives in every home with solid walls and a roof in the world. Indoor plumbing is not necessarily a requirement to have a daily conversation with the Master. Our Master has endowed police departments such as Scotland Yard, La Sûreté, and others with a primer on basic methods of detection. The Master makes genius look simple. Through him, we know well the difference between

discerning and observing. We infer that this guideline applies equally to profound study and analysis of anything, and readily separates laureates from sycophants.

Did our beloved Master not understate the obvious with a seismic boom in « Silver Blaze » in the dialogue with Inspector Gregory, as follows:

“Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?”

“To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.”

“The dog did nothing in the night-time.”

“That was the curious incident,” remarked Sherlock Holmes.

Or, should we say, “observed?”

May I also propose, while offering this toast to our Master, that we hang a plaque of gratitude at the entrance to our homes, proudly declaring, “Sherlock Holmes lives here.”

*Ladies and Gentlemen of the Society,
To the Master!*

5. Special Presentation by Kristin

Kristin gave a presentation on portraits and popular images of Astronomer Royal Sir George Biddell Airy, who she puts forth as one potential influence on Moriarty. An abridged summary of her talk (with images) can be found in Appendix 1. David Reich and Paul brought up Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking as more recent famous scientists whose theoretical work in astronomy has similarities with detective work.

6. Toast to Dr Watson, by David Dowse

David reminded us of Watson's importance to Holmes as a friend during the trying gaps between cases:

To give Dr. Watson his due, he was a gallant Afghan war vet, a man of letters, a trusty companion, and a faithful husband. Today's toast, however, deals with his role in Holmes's life during the gaps or lulls between adventures.

Certainly, Holmes occupied part of this time, as he wrote scholarly monographs on a variety of topics, from the differences in ash from a myriad of cigar tobaccos, to the origins of ancient obscure languages, to the nature and location of soils and muds in the surroundings of London. Holmes busied himself also with cutting and pasting newspaper articles into scrapbooks. He had his chemical laboratory there in his sitting room to help identify clues to crimes. And, of course, there was his trusty violin.

Yet between all these activities and the arrival of mysterious letters, telegrams, and clients, there were also doldrums. Nothing was happening—or, rather, nothing worthy of stimulating the mind of Sherlock Holmes was happening. For without a case, Holmes was not that man of bountiful energy and skill that we have come to know. You could almost say that he shrunk; he went into a shell. It was then that the bad habits of excessive cigarette, cigar, and pipe smoking and the accompanying nicotine poisoning came to the forefront. Let us also not forget his recreational cocaine use creeping into his routine.

This is where Watson came to his rescue, as Holmes's friend, his only friend.

Who among us has not gone through “grey” periods in life? Depression can set in. Questions as to your value to the world around you can cause you to contemplate dark thoughts.

Watson was there to bring Holmes back. At his side in that comfortable chair by the fire, facing him over the breakfast table, or just walking together down the Strand, Watson brought the warmth and comfort of a friend who listened and rarely judged.

Modesty precludes Watson from touting the vital part he played in keeping Holmes, dare we say it, sane.

I ask you to raise your glasses to Dr. Watson, Holmes's elixir to bring him safely through the stagnant grey periods in his life. To Dr. Watson!

11. Toast to the Woman, by Rachel Alkallay

Appropriately for Irene's career as an opera singer, Rachel gave an encore performance of her toast to Irene:

She was "The Woman."

Not "The Other Woman," but "The Woman."

The one, the only.

A rarity, for she was a woman of few words. Five, to be exact.

To Holmes, a master of precision and brevity, those five words held dear in his heart. Her actions, more so, as she bested him in "A Scandal in Bohemia." She also bested the King of Bohemia, a powerful man who feared for his forthcoming marriage because of what she knew about him. And what a scandal she could cause if she chose to use her power. Wisely, and for reasons of her own heart, she chose not to wield that power.

Imagine Holmes, the world's first consulting detective, at the height of his powers, living in London, the capital of the British Empire, at the heights of its considerable powers, bested by an actress! And an American, at that!

Yet her charm, her intelligence, the fleeting sound of her voice as she stage-whispered "Good night, Mr. Sherlock Holmes" captured Holmes's—dare we say it—heart for all time. He revered her; he respected her, a rare sentiment granted by the Master to anyone.

If Sherlock Holmes held her in such reverence, who are we to question the workings of Irene Adler (the Dawn Eagle in translation)? To Irene Adler! To The Woman!

12. Toast to Mrs Hudson, by Carol Abramson

Carol celebrated Mrs. Hudson as a "woman of mystery":

The indomitable landlady of 221B Baker Street, Mrs. Hudson is a woman of mystery.

What do we really know about her? Is she married, widowed, or a single woman, using the honorific title of Mrs. because of her social status?

How old is she? Some Sherlockians describe her as elderly, yet she seems remarkably spry to crawl on the floor and move a wax statue every few minutes. Given the expression "stately tread," we assume her to be a mature woman, perhaps even middle-aged, but we have no other clues as to her real age.

We don't even know her Christian name, as various conjectures float around about that.

We can only assume that she was well paid for her services, and that she enjoyed the aura of danger and excitement that surrounded her very famous tenant.

All we do know for a fact is that Mrs. Hudson put up with a great deal of unusual behaviour and strange visitors to her establishment. She kept her boarders well-fed, and produced a breakfast as good as any Scotswoman. She was present in 11 stories in the Canon, and only spoke in 3 of them, but she was the one fixed point in a household often in flux.

To a woman of courage, the First Lady of Baker Street, Mrs. Hudson!

13. Toast to the Society, by Paul Billette

Paul reminded us that the main purpose of our Society is friendship:

The Bimetallic Question is all about friendship – the friendship of Holmes and Watson, and our friendship for each other.

We are amongst the community of the greatest friends of the world's first consulting detective which are not to be found in Baker Street. This community spans the globe . . . and the decades.

This community of friends can be found in small villages and great metropolises, whether alone with their books or joined with other like-minded eccentrics in almost a thousand societies devoted to the master.

We meet together at regular intervals and for the annual dinner. From time to time, a collective outing to celebrate a noted Sherlockian event is arranged.

Part literary society, part social group, and part source of whimsical entertainment (Steampunk) we meet on a regular basis and delight in the company of like-minded people.

Our members keep us abreast of the happenings in the Sherlockian space through our Show and Tell at the meetings.

We are also the champion of all bickerers by good naturedly arguing over answers to the quizzes and constantly contesting these answers to gain even half points for the marks.

Our members are of all ages and backgrounds. A great knowledge of the stories is not needed - rather a love of the Victorian atmosphere of foggy cobble-stoned streets, hansom cabs, deerstalker caps, and the immortal scene of Holmes and Watson interviewing a client before a crackling fire in their sitting room at 221b Baker Street.

We love our Society and we survive because of the dedication of our fellow members who are not particular in devoting some of their time in helping to keep the wheels turning.

In this year of our 40th anniversary let us show our appreciation by raising a glass in a toast to the Bimetallic Question our very own society.

To the Society!

Quiz and Story Discussion

14. Quiz on "The Crooked Man," Prepared and Presented by Chris Herten-Greaven

Results:	1 st	David Cameron	59	cheese scones
	2 nd	Carol Abramson	57	raisin scones
	3 rd	Kristin Franseen	56	crumpets

Thank you to Miyako for providing pressed flower bookmarks and four-leaf clovers for all winners! Her research on the historical context for the story can be found in Appendix II.

16. Close of the Meeting

Bruno adjourned the meeting at 8:55pm. Congratulations to Elliott for winning this month's special prize!

Appendix I: Kristin's Presentation on George Biddell Airy and James Moriarty

[Note: To save space, I have condensed longer citations and eliminated footnotes. If you are interested in reading more, please contact me for the full version of the paper.]

*The field of astronomy in nineteenth-century Britain encompassed a wide spectrum of individuals and activities, from eclipse and transit expeditions funded by the British government to the publication and dissemination of popular science magazines and guidebooks for the general public. While, as Allan Chapman observes in *The Victorian Amateur Astronomer*, self-taught amateurs at all levels of society played an important role in recording, discussing, and sharing scientific findings throughout the latter half of the century, the figure of the professional astronomer as a member of a distinct social and intellectual sphere also came to prominence during this time. While the general public may not have had access to the training in mathematics, optics, and cosmology necessary to fully follow the scientific implications of new astronomical debates and discoveries, it had plenty of exposure to astronomers themselves through a variety of means, including public lectures, newspaper and magazine articles summarizing the proceedings of organizations like the Royal Astronomical Society, and popular science books documenting the lives of famous astronomers and recent changes to the field (most notably, Richard Proctor's numerous handbooks and Agnes Mary Clerke's *A History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century*, which were published and reprinted several times from the 1870s until the early 1900s).*

Images of British astronomers—from “serious” portraits of historical figures and Astronomers Royal to more humorous images from caricatures, pulp fiction, and early moving pictures—can thus be viewed as a response to the public imagination. By juxtaposing examples from visual culture with conversations about the role of professional astronomers in society, I want to consider the ways in which individual scientists—whether celebrated as heroes of the British intellectual tradition or mocked as isolated from the real world—“stood in” for much larger issues surrounding the gulfs between this planet and the larger universe, and—perhaps nearly as insurmountable—the gulfs between public life and academic matters. While the details of astronomical research might have been difficult for the layperson to comprehend, astronomical quarrels and controversies found their way into Parliamentary debates and popular caricatures.

*I have divided my study into two general sections. The first, focusing on “modern” astronomy in the nineteenth-century, explores images of celebrity astronomer George Biddell Airy over the course of his lengthy and frequently contentious career, first as the Lucasian (1826-1828) and Plumian professor (1828-1835) at Cambridge and finally as the Astronomer Royal (1835-1881). While a great deal of historiographical work exists linking Airy to changing public and academic attitudes towards the British government and the state of astronomical observations, his possible influence on visual images of the astronomer is rarely considered. The second part looks at fictional depictions of astronomers as eccentric, contentious, and even dangerous celebrities in the decades following Airy's retirement. In 1873, a biographical sketch in *Popular Science Monthly* concluded with the following observation:*

...since the death of Sir John Herschel, on the 11th of May, 1871, Sir George Airy, the Astronomer Royal, is the admitted master of the sublime science. There are other eminent English astronomers—as John Hinde, the discoverer of many asteroids, and John Adams, also a Cambridge Senior Wrangler and the rival of Urban Leverrier [sic.], who groped his way by mathematical calculation to the discovery of the position of the hitherto unknown planet Neptune. If incidents as brilliant and remarkable as these are wanting in the history of Sir George Airy, his claims to respect are equally valuable, solid, and enduring.

The mention of Adams and Le Verrier is an oblique reference to one of the more controversial events during the early years of Airy's term as Astronomer Royal. Adams, the English co-discover of Neptune, attempted to present his findings to Airy in 1846, yet was apparently ignored. While twentieth-century historians of science have gone to great lengths to explain the events surrounding Neptune's discovery as a complicated affair involving a voluminous amount of correspondence, conflicting methodologies, and misunderstandings among everyone involved, for some time, Airy's failure to respond to Adams's mathematical calculations of the position of a new planet were viewed as a personal error on the part of either Airy as an individual or the Royal Observatory as an institution. Nonetheless, the dark rumours surrounding this event do not seem to have had an adverse effect on Airy's overall career.



Sir George B. Airy, K.C.B., F.R.S.
by Richard Linley Sanborne, in *Punch* 1883

An 1883 caricature by Richard Linley Sanborne shows a now white-haired, bespectacled Airy mounted like a telescope on the top of Greenwich Observatory, surrounded by stars and a rather dissolute-looking Man in the Moon. Note that Airy himself does not actually seem to be observing these celestial goings-on. Despite his interest in astronomical technology and promotion of observatory expeditions for various comets, eclipses, and transits over the course of his career, Airy's famously poor eyesight led him to delegate the majority of actual observations at Greenwich to various assistants. During debates in Parliament on scientific funding, Sir James South presented figures showing that "of 69,204 observations made at Greenwich in the period 1836-1844, Airy had only made 164." In response, Airy scoffed that "the lowest of all the employments in an Observatory is the mere observation. No intellect and very little skill are required for it. An idiot, with a few days practice, may observe very well."

Historian of science Jessica Ratcliff notes that much of the research on Airy's career has focused on the Astronomer Royal's factory-style running of the Royal Observatory, writing that, "while [Charles] Babbage and the British Association for the Advancement of Science may have stood at the threshold of government science with one foot in the door, the man already inside, and keeping a close eye on the jostling in the doorway, was the Astronomer Royal George Biddell Airy." If this image is suggestive of Airy's role as a political figure in addition to a scientific one, the accompanying text implies yet another view of the astronomer: the incomprehensible specialist. The caption reads, "The Astronomer Royal who deserved the Gratitude of his Country for having corrected the Atmospheric Chromatic Dispersion." While this was in fact an actual astronomical problem that Airy resolved as part of his work during the Transits of Venus, it must have seemed almost humorously nonsensical to anyone outside of the world of astronomy and optics. What rarefied heights of pure mathematics, indeed.

In 1891, a prominent Victorian described his first meeting with another celebrated, yet controversial, astronomer, as follows:

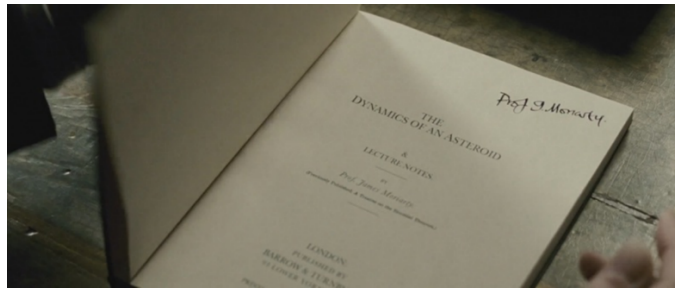
His appearance was quite familiar to me. He is extremely tall and thin, his forehead domes out in a white curve, and his two eyes are deeply sunken in this head. He is clean-shaven, pale, and ascetic-looking, retaining something of the professor in his features. His shoulders are rounded from much study, and his face protrudes forward, and is forever slowly oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion. He peered at me with great curiosity in his puckered eyes.

The speaker, of course, is Sherlock Holmes and the description is of the criminal mastermind Professor James Moriarty, taken from the short story "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (first published in 1893). However, the similarities between this word picture--and Sidney Paget's accompanying illustration of Moriarty in the Strand magazine--and an 1875 caricature from Vanity Fair of the elderly Airy are rather striking, with their subjects wearing long, severe greatcoats, and the physical toll of carrying heavy books and peering at texts and through telescopes evident. In the two Holmes stories featuring Moriarty--the 1893 short story "The Final Problem" and the 1915 novella The Valley of Fear--Moriarty is a sort of Airy-gone-wrong, his mathematical and organizational skills put to use acting as a consultant to various criminal enterprises.



Left: Spy, "Astronomy," in Vanity Fair (1875)
Right: Sidney Paget, "Moriarty" in
"The Adventure of the Final Problem" (1893)

Like Airy, Moriarty published a successful treatise with a "European vogue" at a young age, leading to his appointment to a chair of mathematics before turning his attention to astronomical calculations. When Dr. Watson makes a comment about Moriarty's criminal activities in The Valley of Fear, Holmes responds that the professor's academic fame seems to place him beyond reproach, remarking, "Is he not the celebrated author of The Dynamics of an Asteroid, a book which ascends to such rarefied heights of pure mathematics that it is said that there was no man in the scientific press capable of criticizing it? Is this a man to traduce?"



Moriarty (Jared Harris) autographs a copy of *The Dynamics of an Asteroid* for Holmes (Robert Downey, Jr.) in *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011)

While there is no surviving direct evidence showing Airy as a model for Moriarty, the former's longstanding influence on the field, method of organizing the workforce of Greenwich Observatory, and confrontations with colleagues and government officials alike were all public knowledge through articles in various popular periodicals and might have inspired some to wonder what might happen if such a figure were to go bad. Eccentric and doomed—though not necessarily criminal—astronomers also appear in H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, wherein “the well-known astronomer Ogilvy” and his colleague, Astronomer Royal Stent—the latter described as a “tall, fair haired man” who gave directions to a group of workmen in “a clear, high-pitched voice”—lead a peace delegation to meet the Martian invasion with disastrous results. In the accompanying illustrations by Warwick Goble, the reader does not see Stent or Ogilvy firsthand, but instead witnesses the unfortunate results of their attempts to communicate with the Martians by means of an optical device. More recent Holmes pastiches and adaptations, including Kim Newman's *The Hound of the D'Urbervilles*, James Lovegrove's *The Thinking Engine*, and Anna Castle's *Moriarty Meets his Match*, have let their imaginations run wild when it comes to blending Moriarty's criminal activities and academic intrigue. Guy Ritchie's film *A Game of Shadows* made *The Dynamics of an Asteroid* the center of a popular lecture tour, emphasizing Moriarty's role as a public intellectual. In a parody of *The War of the Worlds* entitled “*The Red Planet League*,” Newman even gives Moriarty a younger, more successful colleague named Sir Nevil Airy Stent, whose career trajectory and reputation for quarrels with fellow astronomers are clearly modeled in Airy. (Unlike Newman's Stent, it should be noted that none of Airy's colleagues ever threw a dead squid at him during a public lecture.)

Airy's life as a public figure popularized not only astronomy, but also the image of the astronomer as a strange, potentially dangerous individual with obscure knowledge, access to political connections and public funding, and a connection to alien worlds. This late nineteenth-century trend of depicting current and fictional astronomers as eccentrics, while shaped by real-world political and scientific events, quickly took on a life of its own in popular genre fiction, especially in early science fiction. Airy the scientist may have had his feet firmly on the ground, but public interest turned him and his colleagues into characters who transcended the limits of actual science into worlds beyond.

Appendix II: Miyako's Notes on “The Adventure of the Crooked Man”

This story is part of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, the second collection of Holmes short stories, published in 1894. It is about a mysterious investigation by Holmes to seek the truth of the death of Col. Barclay, unearthing a terrible and heartbreaking secret of love. It's a story of the punishment (?) by Providence, and no murder.

By the way, in February, my husband Claude and I watched BBC-TV's documentary *Edwardian in Colour*, introducing very old films from the time of King Edward. Thanks to the advanced film technology these days, the old films (more than 100 years old!) are meticulously cleaned and coloured! I couldn't believe my eyes to see all those people around 1910. To me, it's like the time machine to go back to the past! And one thing also caught my eye—the so-called “Street Arabs,” just like in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories. As you know, the word “Arab” also means the homeless little wanderer or child of the street, the ones who survive by begging or even stealing. As we all know, *Sherlock Holmes* employed these street arabs (homeless kids) as his eyes and ears, because he

couldn't be everywhere to investigate. As he said to Watson, "They can go everywhere, see everything, over-hear everyone." Reflecting a real-life fact of Britain when Conan Doyle wrote those stories, we can see the street arab Simpson in this story. Holmes says, "Ah, here is Simpson to report." This is such a small scene, but we can see the background of that era. "He's in all right, Mr. Holmes," cried a small street arab, running up to us. "Good, Simpson!" said Holmes, patting him on the head.

The sad and simple fact is that these poor children were invisible (or people didn't want to see them) to fellow Londoners in those days, but Conan Doyle (in his own way) wanted to write about the existence of those poor kids. According to historians, it was estimated that London had more than 30,000 street arabs, running away from abusive homes, etc., and destitute families also lived on the streets, fending for themselves (begging, stealing, prostitution, etc.). I suppose Mrs. Hudson probably didn't like them, but they became perfect (for spying, etc.) for Holmes to send out into London where he couldn't go. We can see the street kid Wiggins and his friends in two stories (A Study in Scarlet in 1887, and The Sign of Four in 1890). And, in this story, in 1893, Simpson just shows up to report to Holmes. We don't see those kids anymore in other stories. What happened to Wiggins and Simpson? I suppose Conan Doyle thought those little kids didn't matter very much, playing such a relatively small role in Holmes's stories. But to me, those street kids' existence breaks my heart, knowing that those kinds are a part of the world of Holmes's England. When I saw the real-life film on BBC-TV, I had tears in my eyes. Some kids had no shoes, and were literally wearing rags. I thought, didn't well-to-do people have any conscience to help? Rich people lived in luxury in fashionable mansions, with domestic servants and gaslight (and, later, electricity). But the poorest of the poor lived in such conditions scarcely imaginable by today's standards. Poverty and overcrowding led to disease, prostitution, and homelessness. Watson describes them as a dozen barefoot, dirty, "ragged little street arabs," but it's not really their faults! Before cars, I am certain that city streets were covered with horse manure, and the river was a convenient dumping place for everything (raw sewage, factory waste, and even dead bodies). Even in Japan, where I'm from, in 19th-century Tokyo, the police used to find many dead bodies in the rivers. In the 21st century, yes, we still have many problems, but compared to the poverty that people endured in Holmes's era, I certainly feel that people take things for granted!

Before the government's social welfare system, churches tried to help. In this story, Mrs. Nancy Barclay was a member of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Watt Street Chapel, where she was involved, supplied the poor with cast-off clothing. So, I suppose that married ladies were trying to help through their church for social aid and distribution.

In a way, this is mostly just a simple story of a love triangle. James Barclay wanted to have Nancy, and not rid of Henry (who Nancy loved more), but the background of the history in India, where those characters lived in the 1850s, tells a lot of story itself. It's a dark episode in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny (1857-9), and the characters in this story are in the British military to protect British interests. Following the Mutiny, Britain decided to take direct control of India to secure their economic interests, including tea plantations, rubber, timber, cotton, and sugar—all of the raw materials of India pouring into Britain and shipped back as the products of Britain's industrial cities.

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 double-sided paper).