12 issues of SHERLOCK HOLMES adventures brought to you by Stanford University in 2006.

A SHERLOCK HOLMES ADVENTURE: THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES
Dear Readers and Friends,

Ever since Stanford’s serial reading series began in 2002, it has been fired by the generosity, talent, and energy of a remarkable group of people at Stanford. Stanford Continuing Studies, with the enthusiastic support of Charles Junkerman, Dean and Associate Provost of Continuing Studies, has assumed the bulk of the considerable financial responsibility of this project. With the support of the Stanford Alumni Association and Stanford University Libraries, we anticipate being a part of your reading lives for years to come.

Many at Stanford have given cheerfully of their intelligence, their creativity, and their time to bring this series to your home. Linda Paulson dreamed up and has directed the project from its beginning. Mary Eichbauer, Ph.D., created the notes, searched out graphics, and wrote the number summaries. John Mustain, Rare Books Librarian in Stanford’s Special Collections, has been our resident Conan Doyle collector, as well as our expert librarian. Larissa Brookes, Tom Farrell, Janet Sakai, Larry Scott, Lauren Scott, Christy Smith, Stu Snydman, and Peter Whidden made sure that every text and image was tenderly treated and clearly scanned. Anna Cobb took 100-year-old text and graphics and brought them together into compelling harmony on paper and on the website. Aerin Wilson took text, graphics, and design and created the website. Christine Soldahl and Diana Nemirovsky coordinated all electronic aspects of the project. Ben Knelman, a Stanford senior, has answered every single email and voicemail message from friends and readers.

The enthusiasm that has already greeted this project can only be a tribute to Arthur Conan Doyle and to the remarkable vitality of his fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes.

Linda Paulson, Associate Dean and Director, Master of Liberal Arts Program
Director, Discovering Sherlock Holmes

We are making every effort to insure that mailed copies arrive at your home on Friday every week.
If your copy has not arrived by the following Monday, please contact us at sherlockholmes@stanford.edu or at 650-724-2933, and we will mail you another copy immediately.

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

When Arthur Conan Doyle first published his work in The Strand Magazine in 1891, he decided to present essentially serialized works in a new way. Sherlock Holmes, the main character of Conan Doyle’s two short novels, A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four, would also be the hero of the stories in The Strand. Instead of writing another novel and presenting a chapter per week in the magazine, Conan Doyle hit upon a new idea: he would write a series of six loosely related stories about the same characters. That way, readers could read the stories in or out of order with no concerns about continuity.

By 1901, when The Strand had published 24 Holmes stories, and Holmes had been missing in action for eight years, Conan Doyle began work on a longer mystery story based on an old legend from Devon about a spectral hound that haunted a local family. It is not known whether he intended to use Sherlock Holmes in this story from the beginning, but, for whatever reason, Conan Doyle framed this novelette as a story from Watson’s casebooks, supposedly taking place in the late 1880s. Unlike the earlier series of Holmes stories, Hound was serialized in nine parts, from August 1901 to April 1902, each leaving the narrative at an uneasy or suspenseful moment.

Nineteenth-century magazines that printed serialized literature brought mass entertainment to the middle class in an era when books were too expensive to be bought casually. The strategically placed cliffhangers that spiced up most serialized stories encouraged people to speculate about what they had read, thus bringing literature into their daily social interactions. When the long-awaited next installment finally arrived, people would gather in groups to read it aloud and savor every word. Today, that experience is reproduced in a somewhat different form by popular weekly television series that generate what we call “water-cooler talk.” The excitement of savoring a story, sharing our thoughts with friends and family, and waiting to see “what happens next” is not foreign to us, but can only be experienced in the Victorian manner by slowing down and reading a text with others who share the thrilling uncertainty of narrative possibilities.

Although The Strand’s readers loved Hound, they were disappointed that Conan Doyle had not yet decided to resurrect Holmes definitively. That resurrection occurred in 1903 with “The Empty House.”

MARCO BARRICELLI
of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival &
the American Conservatory Theater
will offer a free dramatic reading of
"THE SPECKLED BAND"

Sunday, February 26, 2006, 7:30 p.m.
Kresge Auditorium
on the Stanford University campus.
The Hound of the Baskervilles.*
ANOTHER ADVENTURE OF
SHERLOCK HOLMES.

CHAPTER I.
MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES.

R. SHERLOCK HOLMES, who was usually very late in
the mornings, save upon those
not infrequent occasions when
he was up all night, was seated
at the breakfast table. I stood
upon the hearth-rug and picked up the stick
which our visitor had left behind him the night
before. It was a fine, thick piece of wood,
bubous-headed, of the sort which is known as a "Penang lawyer." Just under the head
was a broad silver band, nearly an inch
across. "To James Mortimer, M.R.C.S.,
from his friends of the C.C.H.," was engraved
upon it, with the date "1884." It was just
such a stick as the old-fashioned family
practitioner used to carry—dignified, solid,
and reassuring.

"Well, Watson, what do you make of it?"
Holmes was sitting with his back to me,
and I had given him no sign of my occupa-
tion.

"How did you know what I was doing?
I believe you have eyes in the back of your
head."

"I have, at least, a well-polished silver-
plated coffee-pot in front of me," said he.
"But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of
our visitor's stick? Since we have been so
unfortunate as to miss him and have no
notion of his errand, this accidental souvenir
becomes of importance. Let me hear you
reconstruct the man by an examination of it."

"I think," said I, following as far as I could
the methods of my companion, "that Dr.
Mortimer is a successful elderly medical man,
well-esteemed, since those who know him
give him this mark of their appreciation."

"Good!" said Holmes. "Excellent!"

"I think also that the probability is in
favour of his being a country practitioner
who does a great deal of his visiting on foot.

"Why so?"

"Because this stick, though originally a
very handsome one, has been so knocked
about that I can hardly imagine a town
practitioner carrying it. The thick iron
ferrule is worn down, so it is evident that he
has done a great amount of walking with it."

"Perfectly sound!" said Holmes.

"And then again, there is the 'friends of
the C.C.H.' I should guess that to be the
Something Hunt, the local hunt to whose
members he has possibly given some surgical
assistance, and which has made him a small
presentation in return."

"Really, Watson, you excel yourself," said
Holmes, pushing back his chair and lighting
a cigarette. "I am bound, to say that in all
the accounts which you have been so good
good as to give of my own small achievements you
have habitually underrated your own abilities.
It may be that you are not yourself luminous,
but you are a conductor of light. Some
people without possessing genius have a
remarkable power of stimulating it. I con-
found, my dear fellow, that I am very much in
your debt."

He had never said as much before, and I
must admit that his words gave me keen
pleasure, for I had often been piqued by his
indifference to my admiration and to the
attempts which I had made to give publicity
to his methods. I was proud too to think
that I had so far mastered his system as to
apply it in a way which earned his approval.

He now took the stick from my hands
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and examined it for a few minutes with his naked eyes. Then with an expression of interest he laid down his cigarette and, carrying the cane to the window, he looked over it again with a convex lens.

"Interesting, though elementary," said he, as he returned to his favourite corner of the settee. "There are certainly one or two indications upon the stick. It gives us the basis for several deductions."

"Has anything escaped me?" I asked, with some self-importance. "I trust that there is nothing of consequence which I have overlooked?"

"I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were erroneous. When I said that you stimulated me I meant, to be frank, that in noting your fallacies I was occasionally guided towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this instance. The man is certainly a country practitioner. And he walks a good deal."

"Then I was right."

"To that extent."

"But that was all."

"No, no, my dear Watson, not all — by no means all. I would suggest, for example, that a presentation to a doctor is more likely to come from an hospital than from a hunt, and that when the initials 'C.C.' are placed before that hospital the words 'Charing Cross' very naturally suggest themselves."

"You may be right."

"The probability lies in that direction. And if we take this as a working hypothesis we have a fresh basis from which to start our construction of this unknown visitor."

"Well, then, supposing that 'C.C.H.' does stand for 'Charing Cross Hospital,' what further inferences may we draw?"

"Do none suggest themselves? You know my methods. Apply them!"

"I can only think of the obvious conclusion that the man has practised in town before going to the country."

"I think that we might venture a little further than this. Look at it in this light. On what occasion would it be most probable that such a presentation would be made? When would his friends unite to give him a pledge of their good will? Obviously at the moment when Dr. Mortimer withdrew from the service of the hospital in order to start in practice for himself. We know there has been a presentation. We believe there has been a change from a town hospital to a country practice. Is it, then, stretching our inference too far to say that the presentation was on the occasion of the change?"

"It certainly seems probable."

"Now, you will observe that he could not have been on the staff of the hospital, since only a man well-established in a London practice could hold such a position, and such a one would not drift into the country. What was he, then? If he was in the hospital and yet not on the staff he could only have been a house-surgeon or a house-physician — little more than a senior student. And he left five years ago — the date is on the stick. So your grave, middle-aged family practitioner vanishes into thin air, my dear Watson, and there emerges a young fellow under thirty, amiable, unambitious, absent-minded, and the possessor of a favourite dog, which I should describe roughly as being larger than a terrier and smaller than a mastiff."

I laughed incredulously as Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his settee and blew little wavering rings of smoke up to the ceiling.

"As to the latter part, I have no means of checking you," said I, "but at least it is not difficult to find out a few particulars about the man’s age and professional career." From my small medical shelf I took down the Medical Directory and turned up the name. There were several
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Mortimers, but only one who could be our visitor. I read his record aloud.

“Mortimer, James, M.R.C.S., 1882, Grimpen, Dartmoor, Devon. House surgeon, from 1882 to 1884, at Charing Cross Hospital. Winner of the Jackson prize for Comparative Pathology, with essay entitled ‘Is Disease a Reversion?’ Corresponding member of the Swedish Pathological Society. Author of ‘Some Freaks of Atavism’ (Lancet, 1882). ‘Do We Progress?’ (Journal of Psychology, March, 1883). Medical Officer for the parishes of Grimpen, Thorsley, and High Barrow.”

“No mention of that local hunt, Watson,” said Holmes, with a mischievous smile, “but a country doctor, as you very astutely observed. I think that I am fairly justified in my inferences. As to the adjectives, I said, if I remember right, amiable, unambitious, and absent-minded. It is my experience that it is only an amiable man in this world who receives testimonials, only an unambitious one who abandons a London career for the country, and only an absent-minded one who leaves his stick and not his visiting-card after waiting an hour in your room.”

“And the dog?”

“Has been in the habit of carrying this stick behind his master. Being a heavy stick the dog has held it tightly by the middle, and the marks of his teeth are very plainly visible. The dog’s jaw, as shown in the space between these marks, is too broad in my opinion for a terrier and not broad enough for a mastiff. It may have been—yes, by Jove, it is a curly-haired spaniel.”

He had risen and paced the room as he spoke. Now he halted in the recess of the window. There was such a ring of conviction in his voice that I glanced up in surprise.

“My dear fellow, how can you possibly be so sure of that?”

“For the very simple reason that I see the dog himself on our very doorstep, and there is the ring of its owner. Don’t move, I beg you, Watson. He is a professional brother of yours, and your presence may be of assistance to me. Now is the dramatic moment of fate, Watson, when you hear a step upon the stair which is walking into your life, and you know not whether for good or ill. What does Dr. James Mortimer, the man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, the specialist in crime? Come in!”

The appearance of our visitor was a surprise to me, since I had expected a typical country practitioner. He was a very tall, thin man, with a long nose like a beak, which jutted out between two keen, grey eyes, set closely together and sparkling brightly from behind a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. He was clad in a professional but rather slovenly fashion, for his frock-coat was dingy and his trousers frayed. Though young, his long back was already bowed, and he walked with a forward thrust of his head and a general air of peering benevolence. As he entered his eyes fell upon...
the stick in Holmes’s hand, and he ran

towards it with an exclamation of joy. “I am
so very glad,” said he. “I was not sure
whether I had left it here or in the Shipping
Office. I would not lose that stick for the
world.”

“A presentation, I see,” said Holmes.

“Yes, sir.”

“From Charing Cross Hospital?”

“From one or two friends there on the
occasion of my marriage.”

“Dear, dear, that’s bad!” said Holmes,
shaking his head.

Dr. Mortimer blinked through his glasses
in mild astonishment.

“Why was it bad?”

“Only that you have disarranged our little
deductions. Your marriage, you say?”

“Yes, sir. I married, and so left the
hospital, and with it all hopes of a consulting
practice. It was necessary to make a home
of my own.”

“Come, come, we are not so far wrong
after all,” said Holmes. “And now, Dr.
James Mortimer——”

“Mister, sir, Mister—a humble M.R.C.S.”

“And a man of precise mind, evidently.”

“A dabbler in science, Mr. Holmes, a
picker up of shells on the shores of the
great unknown ocean. I presume that it is
Mr. Sherlock Holmes whom I am addressing
and not——”

“No, this is my friend Dr. Watson.”

“Glad to meet you, sir. I have heard
your name mentioned in connection with that
of your friend. You interest me very much,
Mr. Holmes. I had hardly expected so
dolichocephalic a skull or such well-marked
infra-oribital development. Would you have
any objection to my running my finger along
your parietal fissure? A cast of your skull,
sir, until the original is available, would be
an ornament to any anthropological museum.
It is not my intention to be fulsome, but I
confess that I covet your skull.”

Sherlock Holmes waved our strange visitor
into a chair. “You are an enthusiast in your
line of thought, I perceive, sir, as I am in
mine,” said he. “I observe from your fore-
finger that you make your own cigarettes.
Have no hesitation in lighting one.”

The man drew out paper and tobacco
and twirled the one up in the other with surpris-
ing dexterity. He had long, quivering fingers
as agile and restless as the antennae of an
insect.

Holmes was silent, but his little darting
glances showed me the interest which he
took in our curious companion.

“I presume, sir,” said he at last, “that it
was not merely for the purpose of examining
my skull that you have done me the honour
to call here last night and again to-day?”

“No, sir, no; though I am happy to have
had the opportunity of doing that as well. I
came to you, Mr. Holmes, because I recog-
nise that I am myself an unpractical man,
and because I am suddenly confronted with
a most serious and extraordinary problem.
Recognising, as I do, that you are the second
highest expert in Europe——”

“Indeed, sir! May I inquire who has the
honour to be the first?” asked Holmes, with
some asperity.

“To the man of precisely scientific mind
the work of Monsieur Bertillon must always
appeal strongly.”

“Then had you not better consult him?”

“I said, sir, to the precisely scientific
mind. But as a practical man of affairs it is
acknowledged that you stand alone. I trust,
sir, that I have not inadvertently——”

“Just a little,” said Holmes. “I think,
Dr. Mortimer, you would do wisely if without
more ado you would kindly tell me plainly
what the exact nature of the problem is in
which you demand my assistance.”

CHAPTER II.

THE CURSE OF THE BASKERVILLES.

“I HAVE IN my pocket a manuscript,” said
Dr. James Mortimer.

“I observed it as you entered the room,”
said Holmes.

“It is an old manuscript.”

“Early eighteenth century, unless it is a
forgery.”

“How can you say that, sir?”

“You have presented an inch or two of it
to my examination all the time that you have
been talking. It would be a poor expert who
could not give the date of a document within
a decade or so. You may possibly have read
my little monograph upon the subject. I put
that at 1730.”

“The exact date is 1742.” Dr. Mortimer
drew it from his breast-pocket. “This family
paper was committed to my care by Sir
Charles Baskerville, whose sudden and tragic
death some three months ago created so
much excitement in Devonshire. I may say
that I was his personal friend as well as his
medical attendant. He was a strong-minded
man, sir, shrewd, practical, and as unimagi-
native as I am myself. Yet he took this
document very seriously, and his mind was
prepared for just such an end as did event-
ually overtake him.”
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Holmes stretched out his hand for the manuscript and flattened it upon his knee.

"You will observe, Watson, the alternative use of the long i and the short. It is one of several indications which enabled me to fix the date."

I looked over his shoulder at the yellow paper and the faded script. At the head was written: "Baskerville Hall," and below, in large, scrawling figures: "1742."

His finger-tips together, and closed his eyes, with an air of resignation. Dr. Mortimer turned the manuscript to the light and read in a high, crackling voice the following curious, old-world narrative:—

"Of the origin of the Hound of the Baskervilles there have been many statements, yet as I come in a direct line from Hugo Baskerville, and as I had the story from my father, who also had it from his.

"It appears to be a statement of some sort."

"Yes, it is a statement of a certain legend which runs in the Baskerville family."

"But I understand that it is something more modern and practical upon which you wish to consult me?"

"Most modern. A most practical, pressing matter, which must be decided within twenty-four hours. But the manuscript is short and is intimately connected with the affair. With your permission I will read it to you."

Holmes leaned back in his chair, placed I have set it down with all belief that it occurred even as is here set forth. And I would have you believe, my sons, that the same Justice which punishes sin may also most graciously forgive it, and that no ban is so heavy but that by prayer and repentance it may be removed. Learn then from this story not to fear the fruits of the past, but rather be circumspect in the future, that those foul passions whereby our family has suffered so grievously may not again be loosed to our undoing.

"Know then that in the time of the Great Rebellion (the history of which by the learned
Lord Clarendon I most earnestly commend to your attention) this Manor of Baskerville was held by Hugo of that name, nor can it be gainsaid that he was a most wild, profane, and godless man. This, in truth, his neighbours might have pardoned, seeing that saints have never flourished in those parts, but there was in him a certain wanton and cruel humour which made his name a byword through the West. It chanced that this Hugo came to love (if, indeed, so dark a passion may be known under so bright a name) the daughter of a yeoman who held lands near the Baskerville estate. But the young maiden, being discreet and of good repute, would ever avoid him, for she feared his evil name. So it came to pass that one Michaelmas this Hugo, with five or six of his idle and wicked companions, stole down upon the farm and carried off the maiden, her father and brothers being from home, as he well knew. When they had brought her to the Hall the maiden was placed in an upper chamber, while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long carouse, as was their nightly custom. Now, the poor lass upstairs was like to have her wits turned at the singing and shouting and terrible oaths which came up to her from below, for they say that the words used by Hugo Baskerville, when he was in wine, were such as might blast the man who said them. At last in the stress of her fear she did that which might have daunted the bravest or most active man, for by the aid of the growth of ivy which covered (and still covers) the south wall she came down from under the eaves, and so homeward across the moor, there being three leagues betwixt the Hall and her father’s farm.

“Then there was a great roar and the maid, most hoarse, screamed out. ‘I am a witch!’ she cried. ‘I am a witch!’ She flung herself on the ground and writhed and stamping and wailing and grooving, and all were appalled and took to their heels. ‘This is a witch!’ they cried. Then the hall was filled with a great din and the maid was dragged out and thrown on the floor and all was confusion and all was vainglory and all was supplication to the gods of the night. And thus it went, day after day, night after night, until the maid was as dead as could be. And then the men were left and they went away and the maid was left by herself in the hall and the hall was left by itself in the moor. And thus it was for many years and the maid was left and the hall was left and the moor was left and the gods of the night were left, and all was quiet and all was still and all was calm and all was peaceful.

“The company had come to a halt, more sober men, as you may guess, than when they started. The most of them would by no means advance, but three of them, the boldest, or it may be the most drunken, rode forward down the goyal. Now, it opened into a broad space in which stood two of those great stones, still to be seen there, which were set by certain forgotten peoples in the days of old. The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there in the centre lay the unhappy maid where she had
that many of the family have been unhappy in their deaths, which have been sudden, bloody, and mysterious. Yet may we shelter ourselves in the infinite goodness of Providence, which would not for ever punish the innocent beyond that third or fourth generation which is threatened in Holy Writ. To that Providence, my sons, I hereby commend you, and I counsel you by way of caution to forbear from crossing the moor in those dark hours when the powers of evil are exalted.

"[This from Hugo Baskerville to his sons Rodger and John, with instructions that they say nothing thereof to their sister Elizabeth.]

When Dr. Mortimer had finished reading this singular narrative he pushed his spectacles up on his forehead and stared across at Mr. Sherlock Holmes. The latter yawned and tossed the end of his cigarette into the fire.

"Well?" said he.

"Do you not find it interesting?"

"To a collector of fairy tales."

Dr. Mortimer drew a folded newspaper out of his pocket.

"Now, Mr. Holmes, we will give you something a little more recent. This is the Devon County Chronicle of May 14th of this year. It is a short account of the facts elicited at the death of Sir Charles Baskerville which occurred a few days before that date."

My friend leaned a little forward and his expression became intent. Our visitor re-adjusted his glasses and began:

"The recent sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville, whose name has been mentioned as the probable Liberal candidate for Mid-Devon at the next election, has cast a gloom over the county. Though Sir Charles had resided at Baskerville Hall for a comparatively short period his amiability of character and extreme generosity had won the affection and respect of all who had been brought into contact with him. In these days of nouveaux riches it is refreshing to find a case where the scion of an old county family which has fallen upon evil days is able to make his own fortune and to bring it back

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with him to restore the fallen grandeur of his line. Sir Charles, as is well known, made large sums of money in South African speculation. More wise than those who go on until the wheel turns against them, he realized his gains and returned to England with them. It is only two years since he took up his residence at Baskerville Hall, and it is common talk how large were those schemes of reconstruction and improvement which have been interrupted by his death. Being himself childless, it was his openly-expressed desire that the whole countryside should, within his own lifetime, profit by his good fortune, and many will have personal reasons for bewailing his untimely end. His generous donations to local and county charities have been frequently chronicled in these columns.

"The circumstances connected with the death of Sir Charles cannot be said to have been entirely cleared up by the inquest, but at least enough has been done to dispose of those rumours to which local superstition has given rise. There is no reason whatever to suspect foul play, or to imagine that death could be from any but natural causes. Sir Charles was a widower, and a man who may be said to have been in some ways of an eccentric habit of mind. In spite of his considerable wealth he was simple in his personal tastes, and his indoor servants at Baskerville Hall consisted of a married couple named Barrymore, the husband acting as butler and the wife as housekeeper. Their evidence, corroborated by that of several friends, tends to show that Sir Charles's health has for some time been impaired, and points especially to some affection of the heart, manifesting itself in changes of colour, breathlessness, and acute attacks of nervous depression. Dr. James Mortimer, the friend and medical attendant of the deceased, has given evidence to the same effect.

"The facts of the case are simple. Sir Charles Baskerville was in the habit every night before going to bed of walking down the famous Yew Alley of Baskerville Hall. The evidence of the Barrymores shows that this had been his custom. On the 4th of May Sir Charles had declared his intention of starting next day for London, and had ordered Barrymore to prepare his luggage. That night he went out as usual for his nocturnal walk, in the course of which he was in the habit of smoking a cigar. He never returned. At twelve o'clock Barrymore, finding the hall door still open, became alarmed, and, lighting a lantern, went in search of his master. The day had been wet, and Sir Charles's footmarks were easily traced down the Alley. Half-way down this walk there is a gate which leads out on to the moor. There were indications that Sir Charles had stood for some little time here. He then proceeded down the Alley, and it was at the far end of it that his body was discovered. One fact which has not been explained is the statement of Barrymore that his master's footmarks altered their character from the time that he passed the moor-gate, and that he appeared from thence onwards to have been walking upon his toes. One Murphy, a gipsy horse-dealer, was on the moor at no great distance at the time, but
he appears by his own confession to have been the worse for drink. He declares that he heard cries, but is unable to state from what direction they came. No signs of violence were to be discovered upon Sir Charles’s person, and though the doctor’s evidence pointed to an almost incredible facial distortion—so great that Dr. Mortimer refused at first to believe that it was indeed his friend and patient who lay before him—it was explained that that is a symptom which is not unusual in cases of dyspnoea and death from cardiac exhaustion. This explanation was borne out by the post-mortem examination, which showed long-standing organic disease, and the coroner’s jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence. It is well that this is so, for it is obviously of the utmost importance that Sir Charles’s heir should settle at the Hall and continue the good work which has been so sadly interrupted. Had the prosaic finding of the coroner not finally put an end to the romantic stories which have been whispered in connection with the affair it might have been difficult to find a tenant for Baskerville Hall. It is understood that the next-of-kin is Mr. Henry Baskerville, if he be still alive, the son of Sir Charles Baskerville’s younger brother. The young man when last heard of was in America, and inquiries are being instituted with a view to informing him of his good fortune.

Dr. Mortimer refolded his paper and replaced it in his pocket.

“Those are the public facts, Mr. Holmes, in connection with the death of Sir Charles Baskerville.”

“I must thank you,” said Sherlock Holmes, “for calling my attention to a case which certainly presents some features of interest. I had observed some newspaper comment at the time, but I was exceedingly preoccupied by that little affair of the Vatican cameos, and in my anxiety to oblige the Pope I lost touch with several interesting English cases. This article, you say, contains all the public facts?”

“It does.”

“Then let me have the private ones.” He leaned back, put his finger-tips together, and assumed his most impassive and judicial expression.

“In doing so,” said Dr. Mortimer, who had begun to show signs of some strong emotion, “I am telling that which I have not confided to anyone. My motive for withholding it from the coroner’s inquiry is that a man of science shrinks from placing himself in the public position of seeming to indorse a popular superstition. I had the further motive that Baskerville Hall, as the paper says, would certainly remain untenanted if anything were done to increase its already rather grim reputation. For both these reasons I thought that I was justified in telling rather less than I knew, since no practical good could result from it, but with you there is no reason why I should not be perfectly frank.

“The moor is very sparsely inhabited, and those who live near each other are thrown very much together. For this reason I saw a good deal of Sir Charles Baskerville. With the exception of Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, and Mr. Stapleton, the naturalist, there are no other men of education within many miles. Sir Charles was a retiring man, but the chance of his illness brought us together, and a community of interests in science kept us so. He had brought back much scientific information from South Africa, and many a charming evening we have spent together discussing the comparative anatomy of the Bushman and the Hottentot.

“Within the last few months it became increasingly plain to me that Sir Charles’s nervous system was strained to breaking point. He had taken this legend which I have read you exceedingly to heart—so much so that, although he would walk in his own grounds, nothing would induce him to go out upon the moor at night. Incredible as it may appear to you, Mr. Holmes, he was honestly convinced that a dreadful fate overhung his family, and certainly the records which he was able to give of his ancestors were not encouraging. The idea of some ghastly presence constantly haunted him, and on more than one occasion he has asked me whether I had on my medical journeys at night ever seen any strange creature or heard the baying of a hound. The latter question he put to me several times, and always with a voice which vibrated with excitement.

“I can well remember driving up to his house in the evening, some three weeks before the fatal event.” He chanced to be at his hall door. I had descended from my gig and was standing in front of him, when I saw his eyes fix themselves over my shoulder, and stare past me with an expression of the most dreadful horror. I whisked round and had just time to catch a glimpse of something which I took to be a large black calf passing at the head of the drive. So excited and alarmed was he that I was compelled to
his health. I thought that a few months among the distractions of town would send him back a new man. Mr. Stapleton, a mutual friend who was much concerned at his state of health, was of the same opinion. At the last instant came this terrible catastrophe.

"On the night of Sir Charles’s death Barrymore the butler, who made the discovery, sent Perkins the groom on horseback to me, and as I was sitting up late I was able to reach Baskerville Hall within an hour of the event. I checked and corroborated all the facts which were mentioned at the inquest. I followed the footsteps down the Yew Alley, I saw the spot at the moorgate where he seemed to have waited, I remarked the change in the shape of the prints after that point, I noted that there were no other footsteps save those of Barrymore on the soft gravel, and finally I carefully examined the body, which had not been touched until my arrival.

Sir Charles lay on his face, his arms out, his fingers dug into the ground, and his features convulsed with some strong emotion to such an extent that I could hardly have sworn to his identity. There was certainly no physical injury of any kind. But one false statement was made by Barrymore at the inquest. He said that there were no traces upon the ground round the body. He did not observe any. But I did—some little distance off, but fresh and clear."

"Footprints?"
"Footprints."
"A man’s or a woman’s?"

Dr. Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered:—

"Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

(To be continued.)
I stood upon the hearth-rug and picked up the stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before. It was a fine, thick piece of wood, bulbous-headed, of the sort which is known as a "Penang lawyer." (2)

Most gentlemen carried walking-sticks in Victorian times—as a sign of status, not of infirmity. Presumably, those who walked extensively over rough terrain would put their walking-sticks to more than decorative use. Penang, formerly a British colony, is today known as Negeri Pulau Pinang and is a state of Malaya. The "Penang lawyer" is a knobbled walking stick made from a native palm.

"I have, at least, a well-polished, silver-plated coffee-pot in front of me," said he. (2)

While Watson assumes that Holmes had used his superhuman powers of deduction to ascertain what Watson is doing, he had merely used his powers of observation.

"The thick iron ferrule is worn down, so it is evident that he has done a great amount of walking with it." (2)

A "ferrule" is the tip of a cane, the part touching the ground.

"Has anything escaped me?" I asked with some self-importance. "I trust that there is nothing of consequence which I have overlooked?"

"I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were erroneous. When I said that you stimulated me I meant, to be frank, that in noting your fallacies I was occasionally guided towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this instance. The man is certainly a country practitioner. And he walks a good deal."

"Then I was right."

"To that extent."

"But that was all." (3)

This wonderful bit of dialogue reveals much about the Holmes-Watson relationship. Watson's failed attempts to apply Holmes's methods give the reader a better appreciation for Holmes's unique talents, and his pride in them.

"Now, you will observe that he could not have been on the staff of the hospital, since only a man well-established in a London practice could hold such a position, and such a one would not drift into the country. What was he, then? If he was in the hospital and yet not on the staff he could only have been a house-surgeon or a house-physician—little more than a senior student." (3)

Conan Doyle draws on his personal knowledge of the difficulties facing a doctor who wished to establish a medical practice in the 19th century.

"Winner of the Jackson prize for Comparative Pathology, with essay entitled 'Is Disease a Reversion?'

Corresponding member of the Swedish Pathological Society. Author of 'Some Freaks of Atavism' (Lancet, 1882). 'Do We Progress?' (Journal of Psychology, March, 1883)." (4)

These articles all concern Victorian ideas of evolution and heredity, hotly contested by scientists at the time. Conan Doyle was born in 1859, the year Darwin's "Origin of Species" appeared. By the time "Hound" was written, Darwin's concept of evolution had been appropriated by the "Social Darwinists," who used it to support a complex array of pseudo-scientific social theories whose origins predated Darwin's work.

"Atavism" describes the recurrence of a trait that has not appeared in several generations, also known as a "throwback." In Conan Doyle's time, when heredity was not well understood, some scientists saw atavism as evidence of a return to an earlier stage of evolution. Criminals were thought to be throwbacks to more "primitive" human traits, and these traits had a Neanderthal-like physical component, as in Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886). By applying a scientific theory to the realm of philosophy, Social Darwinists justified racism, divisions between rich and poor, and colonialism. Darwin rejected such theories as a misuse of his work.

To the well-informed Victorian reader, the titles of Mortimer's articles would plant the subtle suggestion that the "Hound" might be a prehistoric throwback.

And now, Dr. James Mortimer—"

"Mister, sir, Mister—a humble M.R.C.S." (5)

Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, a degree that allowed a doctor to perform basic procedures and minor surgery. In Victorian times, it was one of the least prestigious medical degrees.

"A dabbler in science, Mr. Holmes, a picker up of shells on the shores of the great unknown ocean." (5)

Mortimer paraphrases a famous line from the memoirs of physicist and mathematician Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727): "I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

"I had hardly expected so dolichocephalic a skull or such well-marked supra-orbital development. Would you have any objection to my running my finger along your parietal fissure? A cast of your skull, sir, until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological museum. It is not my intention to be fulsome, but I confess that I covet your skull." (5)

Mortimer means that Holmes has a long head and a developed forehead. He would like to run his finger along the top of Holmes's head, where the bony plates join. His terminology comes from phrenology, a 19th-
century, pseudo-scientific practice, which held that the qualities of intelligence and personality could be read from the shape of the brain, and therefore from the shape of the skull. Various parts of the brain were considered to be the seat of certain qualities, functions, or passions. Today, we know this to be true, but the phrenological map was almost completely inaccurate, and its practice was spurious. By Conan Doyle's time, phrenology had passed out of serious consideration as a science and into the realm of “common knowledge.”

“Indeed, sir! May I inquire who has the honour to be the first?” asked Holmes with some asperity.

“To the man of precisely scientific mind the work of Monsieur Bertillon must always appeal strongly.”

“Then had you not better consult him?” (5)

Alphonse Bertillon (1853-1914), French police official and pioneer in forensics and identity science, invented the “mug shot” and developed anthropometry, a system of bodily measurements meant to reliably identify individuals. This system, never foolproof, was replaced by fingerprinting, which, in turn, is slowly being replaced by DNA testing. The most famous illustration of the weakness of Bertillon’s system is the story of Will West and William West, two inmates incarcerated at Leavenworth in 1901 and 1903, who had identical measurements and nearly identical names.

Their fingerprints, however, were different. Holmes is right to resent the comparison. Bertillon is infamous for being the handwriting “expert” whose inaccurate testimony convicted Captain Alfred Dreyfus for treason in 1894.

“...created so much excitement in Devonshire.” (5)

Devonshire, or Devon as it is most commonly called today, is a county in southwest England known for its wild, rugged landscape. Dartmoor, the dangerous setting of The Hound of the Baskervilles, is today a British national park.

“You will observe, Watson, the alternative use of the long s and the short. It is one of several indications which enabled me to fix the date.” (6)

Holmes could very well deduce a range of dates for the document’s age. The long s, or f, which resembles an f, had a long and complex history in English, and was used within the body of a word when two s’s occurred together. By the end of the 18th century, this practice had died out.

“...in the time of the Great Rebellion (the history of which by the learned Lord Clarendon I most earnestly commend to your attention)...” (6-7)

Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon (1609-1674), was an advisor to Kings Charles II while both were in exile. He wrote a six-volume history of the English Civil War from a royalist point of view called A History of the Great Rebellion.

“...it came to pass that one Michaelmas...” (7)

September 29, the feast day of the Archangel Michael in the Christian calendar.

“...and many a charming evening we have spent together discussing the comparative anatomy of the Bushman and the Hottentot.” (10)

Again, Mortimer’s interest in Social Darwinism is evident. Today, scientists can determine the heredity of a person from skeletal evidence. Social Darwinists, on the other hand, attempted to establish an evolutionary hierarchy based on bodily measurements and characteristics. This hierarchy went hand-in-hand with colonialism, since it was used to find “scientific” reasons why the white race should dominate all others.

The distinction between “Hottentot” and “Bushman” was based on misconceptions by colonials.