

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
SHERLOCK HOLMES
ESSAYS ON VICTORIAN ENGLAND
Volume Two



LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE, PHD



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PRAISE FOR LIESE
SHERWOOD-FABRE, PHD

“We have had the privilege of publishing Liese’s essays in our *Sherlockian E-Times* each month for the past few years.... [W]e here on *The Times*’ editorial staff look forward to each month’s contribution. We have, personally, always found her essays to be both entertaining and informative as well as very well researched. We have had nothing but expressions of interest and praise from our several hundred subscribers over the years.”

— JOEL SENTER, EDITOR, THE
SHERLOCKIAN E-TIMES

A scalpel in a drawer full of knives.

— THAT GUY WHO’S ALWAYS AT STARBUCKS

Once every so often the world hears a new voice. Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD is the person to whom that voice belongs.

— BEN REEDING

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*To my parents, Nova and Charles,
whose support and love will always be with me.*

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FOREWORD

In November 2013, the first of my essays on the *Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes*, “The Life of a Country Squire” went out to Sherlockian newsletters worldwide. After I had completed two years, I felt a larger audience than those receiving the newsletters would be interested in these aspects of Victorian life. After the first volume came out in 2017, I continued to write on Victorian England essays and have now gathered these into volume two.

For the fans of Sherlock Holmes, I would encourage you to check out the various scions that meet to discuss the stories of the world’s most famous consulting detective. There are also numerous Sherlock Holmes conferences and conventions held on a regular basis that can provide additional opportunities to meet fellow Sherlockians.

In such settings, Holmes and Watson still live, and it is always 1895.



AND THEY'RE OFF!

The Canon includes two cases involving race horses. Holmes is called in to investigate the disappearance of Silver Blaze (1) just before the Wessex Cup and Sir Robert Norberton's odd behavior prior to his horse Prince running in the Epsom Derby. (2) The popularity of the sport in Victorian England, in addition to the criminal element at that time, makes it a perfect backdrop for these Sherlockian investigations.

The exact time of the horse's arrival in Britain is not known, but a cavalry rebutted Caesar's first invasion of Britain in 55 BC. The animals were smaller than those today, but quite numerous. (3) Following their use in warfare and other pursuits, racing the animals came into fashion in the early 1600s when King James I built the first grandstand on the Newmarket Heath. Charles II, however, brought horseracing into its own when he built a palace and moved his court there twice a year beginning in 1669. (4) Ever since, Newmarket has been considered the headquarters of British horseracing.

In addition to the racetracks at Newmarket, the Jockey Club built a coffee house at the site for member meetings in 1752. This club, created by gentlemen passionate about horses and racing, became the official governing body for horseracing

in 1860s in an effort to impose more control over betting and horse management. (5) In the early 1800s, horse owners who were commoners were permitted to enter their animals in the races. (6) As a result, the events attracted larger crowds, including the working class. (7) Betting had always been a part of the sport, but it grew more pronounced in the 1830s and 1840s with a number of scandals coming to light. In addition to unscrupulous bookmakers, ineligible horses (above or below the age limit for the race) were discovered among the entrants. (8)

While betting on horses had always been a part of the sport, off-course betting developed in response to the working-class interest, and by the end of the 1840s, was an important feature of the activity. For the most part, these sites evolved from tobacconist shops where men already congregated and placed friendly wagers through the proprietor. Over time, horse betting replaced the original commercial trade in many such establishments. Partitions with pigeon holes for placing bets replaced the counter. Lists of the various races and participants' odds were listed on the walls, and results were reported as fast as runners could arrive from the telegraph office. One of the most well-known and popular establishments was Dwyer's in St. Martin's Lane. In 1851, following heavy betting on the favorite in the Chester Cup, those with winning tickets arrived to find the place emptied and the owner gone, leaving behind a debt of twenty-five thousand pounds. (9)

The Jockey Club's management raised the sport's respectability, and with additional security efforts, such as enclosing the tracks and providing stands, certain races gained popularity as social events. In addition to the race course, other amusements (from food vendors to sideshow attractions) were set up around the area. (10) The Ascot, run in June, became part of the social season where women and men attended (and still do) in their most elegant clothes. (11) Derby Day, also occurring in May or June, became a national holiday.

As these two Sherlockian cases show, however, despite the Jockey Club's efforts to maintain the respectability of horse racing, its continued popularity and history of betting on the outcome, fostered a persistent criminal element in the sport. Gratefully, Holmes and Watson ferreting out at least two of the most grievous offenses.

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3. <http://chestofbooks.com/animals/horses/Health-Disease-Treatment-4/The-Horse-In-Britain.htm>
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6. Hughes, Kristine. *Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England* (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1998) 142.
7. Mitchell, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996) 221.
8. Chesney, 282.
9. Ibid 283 – 284.
10. Hughes, 142.
11. Mitchell, 220 – 221.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book represents two years of research and writing on the various topics presented within these covers. Each has been shared with fourteen different Sherlockian scions across the world. The editors and readers of the scions' newsletters, more than once, gently shared some error I made. I truly appreciate their guidance and continued support. Any other mistakes or omissions, however, are purely my own.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



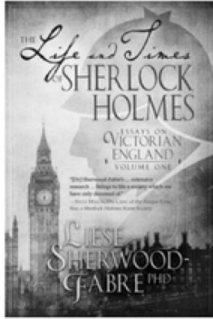
Liese Sherwood-Fabre obtained her PhD from Indiana University and has worked for the federal government, both domestically and internationally, for more than thirty years. Her essays on Victorian England appear monthly in Sherlockian newsletters in five different countries.

As the recipient of several writing awards, including a nomination for the Pushcart Prize, *New York Times* bestselling author Steve Berry has described her writing as "gimmick-free, old-fashioned storytelling." She is active in her local Sherlockian society, The Crew of the Barque Lone Star, as well as a member of the Studious Scarlets Society. Her article on "Evil Women: The Villainesses of the Canon" appeared in the spring 2018 *Baker Street Journal*.

You can sign up for her newsletter at her Website www.liesesherwoodfabre.com, follower her at @lsfabre, or like her "Liese Sherwood-Fabre" Facebook page.

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