



Baker Street in Baltimore

Official Newsletter of the Six Napoleons of Baltimore

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Volume 2019: Issue 12 - December 2019

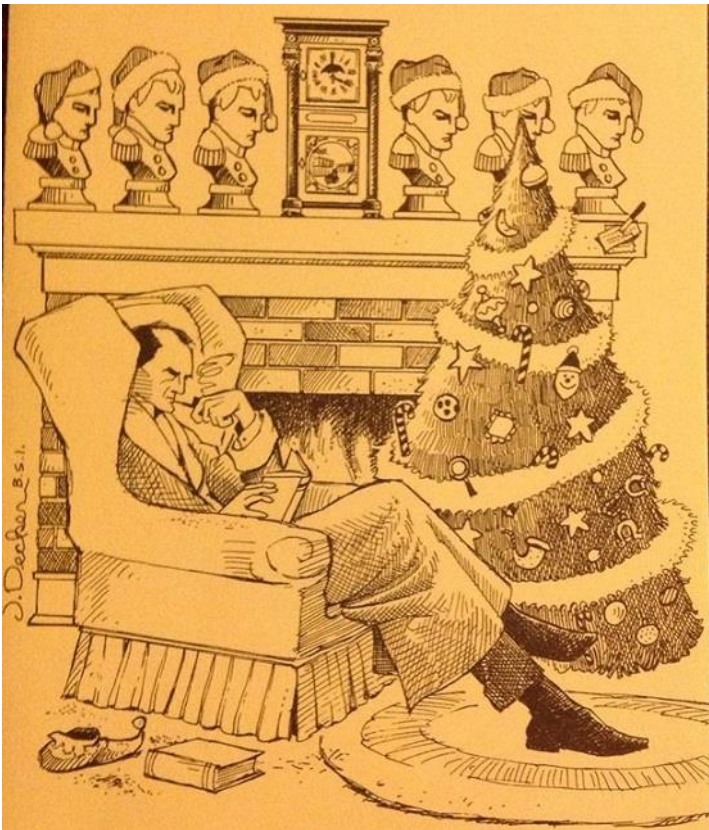


Illustration by Jeff Decker, BSI

**Happy Holidays!
Happy Hanukkah!
Merry Christmas!
Happy Boxing Day!
Happy Kwanzaa!
Happy Festivus!
Happy New Years!
Compliments of the Season!**

*From
The Six Napoleons of Baltimore*

**Karen Wilson
Napoleon CCLXX**



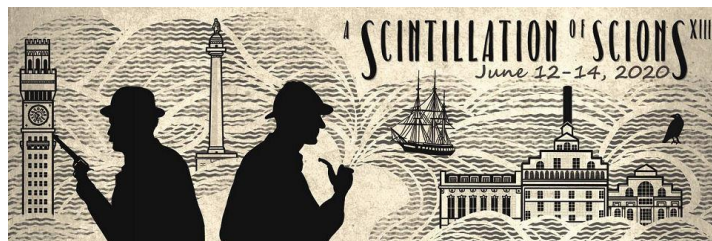
*Karen Wilson wearing the coveted Blue Carbuncle (Photo by
Debbie Clark)*

The Six Napoleons welcome Karen Wilson as Napoleon CCLXX. Karen presented a paper "Remarkable, but Eccentric: Sherlock Holmes, Violinist" at our December 9th meeting. Wilson was the Gasogene of Watson's Tin Box in 2014 and is the current organizer of the annual Scintillation of Scions conference. In addition, she is a member of the Sherlockians of Baltimore, the Sons of the Copper Beeches of Philadelphia and the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- December 30** – *Watson's Tin Box* meeting – Columbia
- January 15-19** – *Sherlock Holmes Weekend* – New York
- January 26** - *Watson's Tin Box The Mycroft* - Columbia
- February 24** – *Watson's Tin Box* - Columbia
- February 29** – *White Rose Irregulars* - Harrisburg
- March 9** – *Six Napoleons of Baltimore* meeting – Squire's
- March 21** – *Sherlockians of Baltimore* luncheon - Sabatino's
- May 9** - *Sherlockians of Baltimore* luncheon – Sabatino's
- June 12-14** – *Scintillation of Scions XIII Weekend* – Elkridge
- June 14** – 34th running of the *Silver Blaze Southern Division* - Laurel
- June 15** - *Six Napoleons of Baltimore* meeting – Squire's
- July 17-19** – *BSI Sherlock Holmes & the British Empire Conference* – near West Point, NY
- August 29** - *Sherlockians of Baltimore* luncheon – Sabatino's
- September 14** - *Six Napoleons of Baltimore* meeting – Squire's
- November 21** - *Sherlockians of Baltimore* luncheon – Sabatino's
- December 14** - *Six Napoleons of Baltimore* meeting – Squire's



Just a reminder that you can still register until December 31st at the early bird rate of \$100 for next June's Scintillation of Scions, a savings of \$25! Presenters include Ray Betzner, Kate Karlson, Steve Mason, Julie McKuras, Ashley Polasek, Dana Richards, and Tamar Zeffren. Register today at <https://www.scintillation.org/>

May your Carbuncles be blue!



Photo by Roger Johnson

Baker Street Quarter Partnership of Marylebone has installed lights at the junction of Baker Street and Marylebone Road, on the theme of "The Blue Carbuncle". I wonder how many of the folks that pass by understand the significance of the decorations?



What do these have in common?

What do the Ravens, Redskins, Eagles, Bills, Chiefs and Saints all have in common?

They are the only NFL teams mentioned in The Canon.

For Medicinal Purposes

by Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

www.liesesherwoodfabre.com

Number 57 of a continuing series

In twelve of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, someone who experienced a shock or injury was given brandy to “bring color to their cheeks.” By the reign of Queen Victoria, the use of medicinal brandy was well established, having first appeared in fifteenth century medical texts as the treatment for everything from emotional problems to deafness.¹

Brandy was created by distilling wine or fermented fruit mash and came from the Dutch word *brandewijn* (“burnt wine”), which referred to the use of heat in the distillation process.² First practiced as a home industry at least as early as the 1100s, physicians and apothecaries had assumed the process by the late 1400s.

The use of heat to distill the product proved basic to medieval beliefs related to the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire). Hieronymus Brunschwig described in his books on distilling that the final product transcended the base elements to create a fifth element that was “the water of life.” Brandy was considered to provide heat to the body and useful in the treatment of a number of ailments. Excessive use in the elderly, however, could lead to spontaneous combustion and was not recommended.³

By the 1800s, brandy was accepted by the medical profession as both a stimulant and a nutrient. While other alcohols (such as whiskey, rum, or gin) could replace it, physicians considered brandy the most pure of all distilled spirits.⁴ Physicians would prescribe brandy (or other liquors) with water as a stimulant. Effects were described as bringing color to the face and increasing the heart rate and mental acuity. Greater quantities, however, were observed to serve as an anesthetic and decrease motor function. One doctor described prescribing brandy as a restorative, a sedative, and “soother of nerves.”⁵

Alcohol, particularly brandy, was also recommended as a part of a patient’s diet for those suffering from a variety of ailments, including cancer, diabetes, and other fevers (illnesses). Because it was absorbed in the stomach, it required no digestion,⁶ and had a higher caloric value than some other foods. For those

convalescing, alcohol was recommended as part of the medical comforts provided to the patient.⁷ Thus, pharmacists dispensed brandy as part of their formulary, and it was even labeled as such. The British medical journal *The Lancet* carried advertisements for medicinal brandy directed at physicians and pharmacists as early as 1845.

At the same time, brandy and other spirits were recognized as leading to alcoholism, and the temperance movement questioned the need for its use in the treatment of diseases. The London Temperance Hospital was recorded as having dispensed it only once in ten years of operation.⁸ Thus, as lawmakers sought to control the sale of alcohol, they had to consider its recognized use in the medical community. For example, the Australian Parliament debated the need to exclude pharmacies from a prohibition of alcohol sales on Sunday, noting that some would be tempted to dispense the liquor to those who were unable to purchase it elsewhere.⁹

Perhaps the most controversial use of medicinal brandy and other spirits occurred in the U.S. during Prohibition. Following the passage of the Volstead Act in 1920 to its repeal in 1933, only physicians with special prescription pads provided by the government could write non-refillable orders for one pint of medicinal alcohol. The prescription cost about \$3 (more than \$37 in current dollars) and required another visit to the doctor if a refill was required. For the first time in the country’s history, the medical community actively opposed governmental regulation of their ability to prescribe a widely accepted treatment and took the federal government to court to seek relief from its encroachment on their ability to treat patients. This had a lasting effect by creating an adversarial relationship long after the repeal of the 20th amendment.¹⁰

With the exception of one case where Watson had to run to a pub to fetch some brandy, in all the other instances, the medicine appeared in a flask, a doctor’s bag, or a nearby tantalus. And with the exception of Julia Stoner’s bite from a swamp adder, a few sips or a dash of it in water or tea brought the affected person back from the brink. Apparently, even brandy had its limitations.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre’s articles on Sarah Cushing and Scandal in the Canon are now out in “Villains, Victims, and Violets,” a study of feminism and agency in the original Sherlock Holmes stories. Available in paperback and eBook from BrownWalkerPress, Amazon, and Barnes and Noble.

¹ B. Ann Tlusty, “Water of Life, Water of Death: The Controversy over Brandy and Gin in Early Modern Augsburg,” *Central European History* Vol. 31, No. 1/2 (1998), page 11.

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/brandy>

³ Tlusty, page 9.

⁴ *New York Medical Journal*: 46: 1887. Page 700

⁵ Samuel Wilks, “An Introduction to a Discussion on the Effects of Alcohol,” *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1600 (Aug. 29, 1891), page 464

⁶ White W.H. Discussion on the value of alcohol as a therapeutic agent. *Proc R Soc Med*. 1920;13, page 47.

⁷ Henry Guly, “Medicinal Brandy,” *Resuscitation*. 2011 Jul; 82(7-2): 951–954.

⁸ J. James Ridge, “The treatment of disease without alcohol,” *British Medical Journal*. 1883;2, page 1158.

⁹ *Parliamentary Debates: 1885*, Melbourne: John Ferrers, 1885, page 908.

¹⁰ <https://melnickmedicalmuseum.com/2010/04/07/medicinal-alcohol-and-prohibition/>