



His Last Bow

Adventure XLVI – The Adventure of the Dying Detective

Is there a doctor in the house? General practitioners with very limited experience and mediocre qualifications — like Watson’s — need not apply! This weekend we turn to the next story, *The Adventure of the Dying Detective*. A few questions and comments on my prescription pad:

“I have no doubt that the house might have been purchased at the price Holmes paid for his rooms during the years I was with him.” By estimating rent payments and the number of years Sherlock Holmes lived there, at what price might the house have been purchased?

Who are some of the celebrated criminals whose portraits Holmes kept on his bedroom wall?

About those microscopic bugs Culverton Smith kept...which were they? Are there now cures for the most deadly diseases of the Victorian/Edwardian years?

Victor Savage is already dead, and there isn’t anybody (like a Violet Westbury) to tell us about his personality and character. We really don’t know him. Does that make him less compelling than, say, Arthur Cadogan West?

Most grocery or pharmacy products mentioned in the canon, like tinned tongue, are not found in my own cupboards. In *DYIN*, however, there’s an item I use nearly every day, and you probably do, too, in one form or another. It’s good old Vaseline! Vaseline is the trade name for petroleum jelly or petrolatum. It’s virtually insoluble in water, with a melting point higher than the human body’s temperature, and almost no smell or taste — all of which make it a useful ingredient in a surprising number of lotions, cosmetics,



medicines and other goods. It's a great product. Pity poor Mrs. Hudson, though. To remove the inevitable Vaseline stains from Holmes's sheets, Mrs. Hudson would need to go to her neighborhood chemist for a cleaning solvent — in those days probably something along the lines of carbon tetrachloride. Cleaning solvents used in Victorian and Edwardian times were often carcinogenic. Sadly, the “dying” detective's landlady may have been slowly dying herself.

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