

Nashville Scholars of the **Three Pipe Problem**

Investiture **January 21, 2012**

A "Certain Gracious Lady" stirs the hearts of Sherlockians even when her name is mentioned during a gathering.

Alexandrina Victoria ascended the throne of England in 1837 when her uncle, King William IV die childless. Her rule, which lasted until 1901, is remembered as the Victorian Age and served as the backdrop for Sherlock Holmes' birth and a great deal of his career as the world's first consulting detective.

The Master's admiration and dedication to Her Majesty is quite defined when we read:

"Some weeks afterwards I learned incidentally that my friend spent a day at Windsor, whence he returned with a remarkably fine emerald tie-pin. When I asked him if he had bought it, he answered that it was a present from a certain Gracious Lady in whose interests he had once been fortunate enough to carry out a small commission. He said no more; but I fancy that I could guess at that lady's august name, and I have little doubt that the emerald pin will forever recall to my friend's memory of the
Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans."

The Master honored her in his Baker Street quarters as well as Dr. Watson tells us in "The Musgrave Ritual", "I have always held too, that pistol practice should be distinctly an open-air pastime; and when Holmes, in one of his queer humors, would sit in an armchair with his hair-trigger and a hundred Boxer cartridges and proceed to adorn the opposite wall with a patriotic V. R. done in bullet-pocks..."

The initials, V.R., honored this special lady whose memory Sherlockians throughout the civilized world still holds dear.

And, just as those letters remain in our thoughts today when we think of Her Royal Highness Victoria, V.R. has a special place in the hearts of all members of the Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem.

In Nashville, we too have a certain gracious lady in our midst as Victoria Joyce Risko Alvarez shares her affection for the Master and for the Scholars when she joins our ranks today with the our investiture of "V.R.".