

# *The Valley of Fear* as an “American Mystery”: Advertising Sherlock Holmes

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## Introduction

Bibliographical studies surrounding the fifty-six short stories and four novels which comprise the “Canon” of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s (1859-1930) Sherlock Holmes stories are both voluminous and hotly contested. Invariably first serialised in *The Strand Magazine*, and later issued in book form in separate English and American editions, the stories have been widely translated and adapted, and become the subject of fan fiction. More than a century after the birth of Sherlock Holmes he remains a cultural icon, much imitated and admired, and representative of the “scientific approach” to crime which captured the ghoulish inclinations of late-Victorian and Edwardian readers. However, little work has been performed on how Sherlock Holmes was marketed, on the rhetoric employed in associated advertising, or to ascertain the literary space which he occupied. This short essay enters relatively barren territory by focussing on the advertising campaign run by *The New York Tribune’s Sunday Magazine* in which *The Valley of Fear*, Doyle’s last full-length Holmes novel, was serialised and marketed as an “American Mystery” in 1914, near-simultaneously with its UK serialisation in *The Strand Magazine*.

## Plot Summary

Conan Doyle’s fourth novel-length Sherlock Holmes mystery, *The Valley of Fear*, appeared thirteen years after the much-praised *Hound of the Baskervilles*, published in 1901. The narrative is divided into two parts: Part I contains, “The Tragedy of Birlstone” and takes place entirely in England. It begins at 221B Baker Street when Holmes receives a mysterious cyphered note from Mr. Porlock, known to him as an agent of the criminal mastermind, Professor Moriarty. The note warns of the impending death of Mr. Douglas, a country gentleman. Within minutes of receiving and ingeniously decoding the note, Holmes and Dr. Watson receive a visit from Inspector MacDonald of Scotland Yard. He promptly informs them of the gruesome murder of a Mr. Douglas of Birlstone House in Sussex, and they immediately set off together to the scene of the crime. In Sussex, they are met by White Mason, who we

are informed is the county's most astute detective.

At Birlstone House, a moated manor with a drawbridge, it is quickly ascertained that the murder weapon is a sawn-off shot gun, a peculiar weapon for such a murder, and suggesting an American perpetrator. Examining the body of the victim, the detectives find the face so disfigured by the blast that little can be determined. However, the man bears a curious mark on his forearm, a triangle in a circle, which the detectives attribute to a secret society. There are various clues indicating how the murderer might have escaped, such as wading across the moat, but every explanation of the "snorter" of a case, does not appear satisfactory, and the police fail to pick up the culprit. However, Holmes pursues his own line of inquiry, and finally reveals that the dead man is not in fact Mr. Douglas, but an agent of the Eminent Order of Freeman, who had been sent to kill him. After killing the would-be assassin in self-defence, Mr. Douglas had been hiding in an old priest hole, hoping to use the opportunity of his presumed death to disappear and escape from the clutches of the gang who had spent years pursuing him.

Part II: The Scowrers, tells the story of Mr. Douglas's former life in America, as an undercover Pinkerton man<sup>1)</sup> sent to the lawless coalfields of Vermissa which is terrorised by a branch of the Eminent Order of Freeman, and run by Councillor McGinty, an enormous and cruel man. Under the name of McMurdo, Douglas infiltrates the order and eventually engineers their demise. The ring leaders are captured and sent to the gallows, but the few who remain swear vengeance on him and he is forced to move around to avoid their clutches. In an Epilogue, we return to the present and to Baker Street, where Holmes warns Mr. Douglas that the danger has not yet passed, and we later learn that he has been lost overboard on his way to a new life in Cape Town. Reversing the central plot point in a flash, Holmes points the finger at Professor Moriarty, "This crime is from London, not from America" he states, and the story ends.

The novel itself contains several themes, but the most important concerns the ethics surrounding the activities of the American labour unions, which were flexing their muscles in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This uncomfortable renegotiation between labour and capital is set against the background of tough physical masculinity with more than a hint of the pioneering lawlessness of the "Old West", which contrasts with the apparent decorum of the urban Chicago lodge. It seems more than likely that D. H. Lawrence's novel *Kangaroo* (1923), featuring the Diggers, a politically active group of miners set in the tough Australian outback, was influenced by *The Valley of Fear*. In the novel, the right-wing Benjamin Cooley exerts his own tyranny over the mining community through violence and

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1 ) The Pinkerton National Detective Agency was a private police force founded in Illinois in 1850. It played a key role in anti-labour unions activity, and helped to break up the Molly Maguires, a secret organization of coal miners, on which Doyle based his fictional Eminent Order of Freeman.

intimidation, in much the same way that the publican, McGinty, does in *The Valley of Fear*.

### Serialisation in *The New York Tribune Sunday Magazine*

The *Sunday Magazine* was a weekend supplement to *The New York Tribune*, a daily newspaper founded in 1841 by Horace Greeley which, after several name changes, ceased publication in 1966. A glossy magazine containing fiction, poetry, and art, as well as non-fiction articles, it was part of the arsenal of print weapons deployed in the intense battle for readers which raged between powerful newspaper barons bent on gaining greater market share and influence in public affairs. The considerable printing costs of the magazine were mostly defrayed by advertising, although little work has been done on the detailed economics of newspaper supplements.

Debate swirls among scholars as to whether the *Sunday Magazine*'s serialisation of *The Valley of Fear*, which appeared on its pages from 20 September 1914 - 22 November 1914, can be properly considered the true first edition, since American readers were able to finish reading the entire story in its serial form some five months before their British counterparts, who had to wait until the final part appeared in *The Strand Magazine* in May, 1915. In book form, American readers also had the advantage, with copies published by George H. Duran and Company, New York, available from the 27 February 1915, while British readers had to wait until 3 June 1915 for its release by Smith, Elder & Co. of London. American readers were able to enjoy the world premiere of *The Valley of Fear* because of the enormous sum paid for its serial rights by the *Sunday Magazine*, which perhaps goes some way to explaining the book's two-part structure and American bias, a point which was emphasised in its American advertising.

In order to ensure the success of the novel in America, *The New York Tribune* and its associated *Sunday Magazine* conducted a sophisticated advertising campaign prior to its serialisation which centred on three core aspects: the American focus of the story, the amount paid for the serial rights, and the fact that it would likely be the last “outing” of the world's greatest detective. Numerous advertisements were placed in *The New York Tribune* and in other newspapers such as *The Evening Star* in the weeks running up to publication, while editorial comments in the *Sunday Magazine* itself and other Doyle-related content used the full gambit of strategies available to the twentieth-century advertiser. These included, “grab while you can” inducements, while various carefully-worded statements implying that *The Valley of Fear* would be the last Sherlock Holmes mystery that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would write were reinforced by written testimony in his own hand. As it turned out, this claim was only half true. While it was the last full-length novel featuring Holmes, *The Case-book of Sherlock Holmes*, published in 1927 in American and English editions contained twelve short stories which had been first published in *The Strand Magazine* between October 1921 and

April 1927.

When *The New York Tribune* commissioned *The Valley of Fear* in 1914, their relationship with Conan Doyle was already well established. In 1905, they had paid the princely sum of \$25,000 for the exclusive magazine rights in America for *Sir Nigel*, a medieval romance marketed as a superior “companion to the White Company”. It began its serialisation on the 3 December, 1905 and ran to the end of February 1906, lavishly illustrated by America’s top magazine illustrator, Clement Coll. This serialisation was heavily advertised both before and during publication, as “Conan Doyle’s masterpiece” and “unquestionably one of the greatest historical romances ever written”.<sup>2)</sup> Nevertheless, literary memories are short, and it was important to remind American readers after an almost ten-year absence, who Conan Doyle was and to reacquaint them with his fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, while at the same time giving them a taste of what was to come. Like all good publicity campaigns, marketing activities began slowly, and reached a crescendo just before serialisation commenced on 20 September 1914.



Figure 1: “Characters from the Books of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle”, by Clement Coll. *NYT Sunday Magazine*, 20 September 1914, pp. 10-11.  
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On Friday 3 September 1920, *The New York Tribune* announced in a rather understated advertisement, that a “Character Study of the famous novelist”, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, would appear in the next issue of their *Sunday Magazine* (6 September), and that a new Sherlock Holmes story, “The Valley of Fear” would begin two weeks later on the 20 September. The promised biographical sketch by Filson Young<sup>3)</sup> duly appeared, billed as “An Appreciation” on the 6 September 1914, (pp. 3-4), along with a colour portrait of Conan Doyle taken from an autochrome photograph by German-American portrait photographer Arnold Genthe (1869-1942) on the front cover, and as shown in Figure 1, a double-page montage of “Characters from the books of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle” rendered in pen and ink by artist Clement Coll.<sup>4)</sup> This is believed to be the first and only time that Coll

2) *The New York Tribune*, 29 November 1905, p. 12.

3) Alexander Bell Filson Young (1876-1938) was a journalist who made a name for himself reporting on the RMS Titanic disaster in 1912 and published a book on it called *Titanic* in the same year.

4) *Sunday Magazine*, 6 September 1914, pp. 10-11.

portrayed Sherlock Holmes. The image depicts Holmes smoking a pipe and is taken from a scene from *The Sign of Four*, Doyle’s second novel published in 1890. The humble advertisement signalled the beginning of a busy two-week lead-in to publication which involved a veritable bonza of materials and Doyliana, and even included a surge in advertisements by pipe manufacturers and tobacco suppliers seeking to cash in on Sherlock mania that was captivating big-city America. In an editorial at the bottom of the contents page of this issue, under the title, “The New Sherlock Holmes Serial” the rhetoric was amped up from previous notices: “The first publication of a new Sherlock Holmes story beginning in our *Sunday Magazine* of September 20



Figure 2: Cover by M. C. Perley, *NYT Sunday Magazine*, 13 September, 1914. © Shadowlands Archive.

will be an epochal event in literature” it claimed, boasting that the story contained material of such “thrilling interest” that Doyle had been compelled to turn what had been intended as a much shorter tale into a full-length serialisation. Moreover, in recompense, he had received, “the largest price ever paid for a serial in the history of publication, a price which approaches the yearly salary of the President of the United States”.<sup>5)</sup> This was quite some claim. If true, it would have amounted to nearly \$75,000, or more than two million dollars today when adjusted for inflation.<sup>6)</sup> Clearly, no expense had been spared to secure the rights, and the decision to commission Arthur I. Keller<sup>7)</sup> to produce illustrations to a standard that was the “highest in magazine making” only reinforced their intentions. Filson Young’s potted biography reacquainted American readers with the career and public-spirited activities of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, reminding them of his previous literary successes in order to pique interest in the new novel.

A week later, the *Sunday Magazine* (13 September) directed its readers’ attention towards the forthcoming novel itself, teasing them with a front cover designed by M. C. Perley which featured a delineation of sixteen of the main characters, described as being in the, “German poster-stamp style”, and printed in the six colours that always adorned the *Sunday*

5) *Ibid.*, p. 2.

6) In 1909 Congress raised the annual presidential pay to \$75,000. Some caution is necessary here for *The New York Tribune* had previous form for exaggerating Conan Doyle’s literary earnings. So much so, that he felt compelled to write a letter to the editor regarding hyperbolic claims concerning lecturing fees in America. See *The New York Tribune*, 1 September 1895.

7) Arthur Ignatius Keller (1867-1924) was a U. S. painter and book illustrator. He won gold medals for his work at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904 and the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

*Magazine's* covers.<sup>8)</sup> [Figure 2] For the first time in an issue of the *Sunday Magazine*, *The Valley of Fear* was firmly characterised as, “an American mystery”, as the editor sought to ensure that the quintessentially English Holmes would resonate with American readers. The editorial asserted that *The Valley of Fear* “could almost be called an American story” since, “The chief characters in the tragedy itself, apart from Sherlock Holmes, are Americans. Two-thirds of the action of the story takes place in America”.<sup>9)</sup> There was also repetition of the claim concerning the cost of the serialisation which had already appeared in advertisements, but here the editor explicitly set out the reasons why the *Sunday Magazine* had paid such a high price for the serial: “Our Sunday Magazine paid this great sum for *The Valley of Fear* because the tale is worth what it cost to give its readers exclusively the most popular kind of story, by the greatest writer of mystery stories, in which the hero is the most interesting character in modern fiction”.<sup>10)</sup>

Momentum continued to build. On the 16 September, a large advertisement in *The New York Tribune* featured a clenched fist and forearm bearing the branding of the Eminent Order of Freeman, a secret American labour society which was an essential component of the plot [Figure 3]. The striking image borrowed from the visual lexicon of the labour movement of the early twentieth century, giving readers the first hint that the story would feature organised labour unions prominently. “The mark of mystery” ran the catchy slogan accompanying the image. Just as the sawn-off shotgun used in the murder at Birlstone Manor hinted at an American culprit, so too the branding itself was closely associated with American cattle ranches and the darker practice of branding slaves. After the slogan, the advertisement gave a direct excerpt from the novel: “Sherlock Holmes bared the dead man’s arm to his elbow. He found this strange signature. It wasn’t painted: nor tattooed. It was actually burnt into the flesh”.<sup>11)</sup> At the bottom of the advertisement, readers were encouraged to order their copies of the *Sunday Magazine* early in order to avoid disappointment.

The next day, another advertisement appeared in *The New York Tribune* using the same technique: this time the image of a bloody hand print, and another quote from the book [Figure 4]. As with the previous advertisement, it also emphasized the importance of pre-ordering due to the great demand. This was a classic marketing ploy. By now, advertising for *The Valley of Fear* was a daily occurrence. On the 18 September a large advertisement featured a burning candle, which as readers would soon find out, was the key to Holme’s

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8) *The New York Tribune*, 8 September 1914, p. 4. The cover image was later adapted as advertising material for an exhibition highlighting the connection between serial fiction and newspapers: “Novelists & Newspapers: The Golden Age of Newspaper Fiction, 1900-1939”, Komaba Museum, University of Tokyo, 29 April – 25 June, 2017. Curated by Peter Robinson.

9) *Sunday Magazine*, 13 September 1914, p. 2.

10) *Ibid.*

11) *The New York Tribune*, 16 September 1914, p. 9.



Figure 3. *The New York Tribune*, 16 September 1914, p. 9.



Figure 4. *The New York Tribune*, 17 September 1914, p. 6.



Figure 5. *The New York Tribune*, 18 September, 1914, p. 10.

solving of the murder in part one of the story [Figure 5]. Combined, these three advertisements acted as a primitive form of trailer which would later be used in the film industry to such devastating effect. Nearing publication, the polite request to readers had now become a demand: “ORDER YOUR COPY NOW”.

On the 19 September, the day before serialisation began, a picture of Sherlock Holmes smoking his pipe appeared in *The New York Tribune*, spanning three columns. It was perhaps recognition that, despite attempts tie the story to America and to tease readers with imagery taken directly from the story, it was ultimately Sherlock Holmes who would be the biggest draw and move copies of the magazine off shelves and into homes. The banner on the advertisement ran simply, “Tomorrow. Sherlock Holmes!”.

If the figure Doyle was paid for *The Valley of Fear* approaches anywhere near what has been claimed, this considerable investment was only made possible by the rise in newspaper circulation and reduced printing costs in the American newspaper market, which was fuelled by intense competition for readers between newspaper barons such as Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, who sought innovative ways to hook readers. For *The New York Tribune*, having a world premiere by a world-famous author, featuring one of the most famous characters in the history of English literature, was certainly a means of attracting readers, and a great coup. Nevertheless, advertising serial fiction was, and remains, complex and differs considerably from book advertising. This is because the story itself is not what is actually being sold to readers; rather it is the larger container, the magazine title itself, which is being

sold. The serial novel does not sit on the page on its own, but nestled among other stories, features, and advertisements. So, while an exclusive first appearance of one of the most loved literary characters by a living author was likely to have a positive short-term effect on sales, a delicate balance had to be struck between promoting it to gain readers of the magazine on the one hand, while on the other, not allowing it to overshadow the rest of the magazine contents or to create conditions for a post-serialisation slump. After all, the magazine had to outlive the serialisation. There is evidence that editors were all too aware of the dangerous game they were playing from the outset. In the launch issue of 20 September its editorial opined:

We cannot **always** have brilliant features like this Sherlock Holmes serial, because very few of them are written. Probably there will never be another just like this. But always there are good stories, good articles, joyous humor, and a sound, interesting wholesomeness....<sup>12)</sup> [my emphasis].

The editorial issued on 27 September for the *Sunday Magazine* repeated this message: "Of course you will be unable to see anything in our next number until you have read the instalment of THE VALLEY OF FEAR. But it is a strong and varied number, apart from the highest-priced serial ever published,"<sup>13)</sup> while on the 11 October, almost halfway through the serialisation, another editorial remarked, "There are other admirable things in our next number".<sup>14)</sup>

After the fanfare of the launch however, there were indicators that perhaps all was not well with the most expensive serialisation in the history of literature. Only a week after the story began, an advertisement appeared in *The New York Tribune* which included a comment by Conan Doyle on his latest mystery, written in his own hand and reproduced in facsimile. It stated, "I fancy The Valley of Fear is the swan-song of Sherlock Holmes". Perhaps some scepticism had been voiced about the claim that *The Valley of Fear* would indeed be the last Sherlock Holmes mystery: the reading public still remembered how Holmes had been killed off and miraculously resurrected once before. Providing the message in Doyle's own handwriting was a visual imprimatur, and helped to give it greater credence and to authenticate the claim.<sup>15)</sup> If readers did not get the point, the same advertisement reinforced it in no uncertain terms: "It means just this; the greatest of all detectives is at work on his last case. That wonderful brain will never again appear in those feats of crime investigation which have

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12) *Sunday Magazine*, 20 September 1914, p. 2.

13) *Sunday Magazine*, 27 September 1914, p. 2.

14) *Sunday Magazine*, 11 October 1914, p. 2.

15) Doyle's desire to kill off Holmes has been well documented. He appeared to have done so in *The Final Problem* published in 1893, but he was miraculously resurrected in *The Adventure of the Empty House* in 1903.

amazed and enthralled the world”.<sup>16)</sup> But in choosing to major on the idea that Holmes would not be making another appearance as a reason to subscribe to the *Sunday Magazine*, advertisers were playing a dangerous game, for the last time Holmes appeared to have been terminated, *The Strand Magazine* lost a reported 20,000 subscribers almost overnight, and suffered a severe backlash from fans.

The advertising strategy seemed to be unravelling in other ways too. Four weeks into the serialisation, and the repeated claims that *The Valley of Fear* was “an American mystery”, did not seem to be materialising at all, save for the assertion that the murder weapon—a sawn-off shotgun—made it likely that the Birlstone murderer was an American. Readers were getting impatient. When would Holmes arrive in America? The *Sunday Magazine* sensed this impatience too, but was struggling to deal with the unorthodox two-part structure of the novel, with the mysterious murder of Mr. Douglas having been solved on the 18 October: “Perhaps you may think that this solution practically ends the story”, stated their editorial with a hint of concern, “As a matter of fact it is only just the beginning”.<sup>17)</sup> Readers remained unconvinced. On the 11 October the *Sunday Magazine* had announced with relief that, “The Valley of Fear is in America”, but readers would soon discover that Sherlock Holmes was not. The deliberately ambiguous language used in advertising had convinced many fans that Sherlock Holmes would be setting foot on American soil, as he had done in France during *The Adventure of the Final Problem* (1893). Instead, readers were invited to “journey back some fifteen years in time, and westward some thousands of miles in space”<sup>18)</sup> to hear the backstory of how Mr. Douglas had ended up at Birlstone Manor, England. Although a compelling story in its own right, Sherlock Holmes is completely uninvolved, only making a cameo in the Epilogue at the end in which, implausibly, Professor Moriarty is revealed to be the “master hand” behind the murder attempt on Mr. Douglas. The overriding impression is that once the action shifts to America, interest in Doyle petered out. Soon, advertising for *The Night Owl*, a new serial by Paul West eclipsed *The Valley of Fear*, and the final part issued on 22 November, had no editorial comment whatsoever. A humbling fate for the most expensive serial ever published.

Without detailed reader numbers, it is impossible to tell whether *The Valley of Fear* turned out to be a wise investment for the *Sunday Magazine* or not. Clearly, the outbreak of WWI affected the publishing climate and appetite for certain types of stories, but there was always something unsatisfactory about the way in which *The Valley of Fear* was structured and presented to the market. Conan Doyle was trying to do the near impossible by writing a single novel for two distinct readerships: the British reading public, familiar with the places

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16) *The New York Tribune*, 23 September 1914, p. 10.

17) *Sunday Magazine*, 11 October 1914, p. 2.

18) Conan Doyle, *The Valley of Fear*, serialised in *The New York Tribune Sunday Magazine*, 18 October 1914, p. 12.

and culture represented in the stories; and American readers who had essentially underwritten the novel, and who the *Sunday Magazine* believed needed to have Holmes solving an “American mystery”. Not only did this lead to the curious structure of the novel which began where it naturally ended, but was perhaps a misjudgement in the first place, for American readers already had a wealth of American writers to choose from; writers with direct experience of American life. What they wanted, was Holmes (absent for two-thirds of the novel) and a good portion of the old-fashioned Englishness which was very much in vogue at the turn of the century and well into the 1920s, replicated across America in the form of neo-Tudor buildings and gardens in the English cottage garden style.

These two distinct audiences come into sharper relief through comparison of the advertising material surrounding both the serialisations and the books. As we have seen, American advertising promoted the story as American-centric, emphasized the money paid for it, and that it was the last chance to meet Sherlock Holmes in a new mystery. The two-part structure was viewed as innovative, and something that heightened the excellence of the writing. By contrast, British advertising tended to emphasize Part I of the story and how it maintained the familiar country house murder theme which readers expected. In an advert for *The Strand Magazine*'s serialisation, *The Valley of Fear* was connected with the *Hound of the Baskervilles*, reinforcing the idea that it fell firmly within the Sherlockian tradition.<sup>19)</sup> Similarly, advertising for the Smith, Elder & Co. edition remarked that, “this is ‘Sherlock Holmes’ at his best”. The *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* review of what was the first English edition made similar observations: “The first [part] narrates a regular Sherlockian crime—a murder in a country house accompanied by strange circumstances”.<sup>20)</sup> It astutely observed that in Part II, Doyle takes the reader to a “strange region and introduces us to characters of whom little has been heard in this country”.<sup>21)</sup> The review reminded English readers that, “These [secret] societies exist in the United States, and the police records are full of such outrages here described,” before confirming that they had not before encountered “such a vivid account of them”<sup>22)</sup>. Nowhere in the British advertising material is there any attempt to frame the story as “an American mystery”, nor is there any intimation that this

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19) Serialisation in *The Strand Magazine* ran from September 1914 - May 1915. *The Strand Magazine* was a monthly magazine, founded in January 1891 by George Newnes. It carried short stories and articles aimed at a mass readership. Over the years it published the work of many famous writers such as Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), Agatha Christie (1890-1976), and Graham Greene (1904-1991), but was most associated with the activities of the pipe-smoking private detective, Sherlock Holmes. *The Strand Magazine* carried the entirety of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes short stories starting with *A Scandal in Bohemia* in 1891 and ending with *The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place* in 1927. A total of thirty-eight of the stories were illustrated by Sidney Paget.

20) “Sherlock Holmes Again”, *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 698, 3 June 1915, p. 186.

21) *Ibid.*

22) *Ibid.*

was to be the final Sherlock Holmes story. Indeed, English readers were highly resistant to any attempt to appropriate Sherlock Holmes as an American, and the idea of taking literary possession of him was fiercely defended against. A good example of this can be found in the *TLS*'s review of *Baker Street Studies* by H. W. Bell, in which the reviewer savages the work of A. G. Macdonnell who, “Approaches the perennial problem of the great Moriarty myth from the point of view that it must be possible to reconcile “The Valley of Fear” (which we have argued to be the world of the same Americanising apocryphist who inserted the Mormon episode into a “Study in Scarlet”) with “The Final Problem.””<sup>23)</sup> The clear implication is that there was already a group of Sherlockians who perceived that plotlines were being driven by external influences rather than internal logic and consistent characterisation.

Consideration of how *The Valley of Fear* was presented to the American market in its serial form, has suggested that although pre-serialisation advertising was coherent and successfully leveraged both generic mystery tropes and those with a distinctive American flavour, advertising *during* its serialisation hints that it had been rather mis-sold to readers. Part I was a reasonably robust Holmes mystery, which although certainly not reaching the heights of the *Hound of the Baskervilles*, nevertheless fitted in well with the “Canon”. The second part was arguably better written and more entertaining in its own right, exploring themes which sat comfortably with *The New York Tribune*'s readers, who were regularly exposed to stories about the Wild West and rural America. However, the only logical conclusion that can be arrived at, is that all parties would have been better served if the novel had been separated into two distinct works, rather than joined by a tenuous connection which *The New York Tribune* struggled to reinforce.

It has not been possible to determine whether a sales spike for copies of the *Sunday Magazine* occurred, but the serialisation was forgotten almost before it was completed. In the end, perhaps this says more about serialisation as a literary form and scholarly attitudes towards it, than it does Doyle's literary endeavours. Read by millions, the ephemerality of serial fiction seems to condemn it to bibliographical footnotes, when in truth, as in the case of *The Valley of Fear*, serials were often generative and of existential importance to the novel itself.

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23) “Baker Street Studies.” *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1695, 26 July 1934, p. 523.