

TOAST TO MR. AND MRS. NEVILLE ST. CLAIR
Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes Fall Luncheon
On the occasion of All Saints' Day, November 1, 2015
Ira Brad Matetsky

On this Day of All Saints, it is my task to toast
A man and his wife whose tale left us engrossed.
Recall when the Master down south took a trip,
And uncovered the Man with the Twisted Lip.

Our story begins with Mr. Isa Whitney –
Of his many vices I shan't give a litany,
Because, once he's found in the opium den,
He's sent home and never is mentioned again.

But an opium den – what is Holmes doing there?
We soon learn that he's searching for Neville St. Clair.
His client is Mrs. St. Clair, of The Cedars
(Holmes spends lots of time there, observe many readers.)

Holmes fears that St. Clair's been a victim of violence.
He lauds Dr. Watson for his gift of silence.
They travel to Lee, in the County of Kent,
Where the Mrs. St. Clair greets them, full of torment.

She has but one question: "Oh, where is my Neville?
"Is he still alive, or gone down to the devil?"
Holmes thinks the man's dead – but now here is his letter –
A "galvanized" Holmes declares, now that is much better.
Though the postmark, ironically, comes from "Gravesend,"
It is still a good sign: Dead men no letters send!

The last who was seen with St. Clair was Hugh Boone,
A professional beggar man, not a tycoon.
Neville waved from upstairs; his wife saw his bare throat,
And the only real clue is the coins in his coat.
But the man is still absent, just where none can tell,
So Boone's brought to Bow Street and locked in a cell.

Then Holmes says to Bradstreet, "I'll now solve this case
"By applying a sponge to the prisoner's face."
And Neville St. Clair by this means Holmes unmasks;
The man is embarrassed, but cogently asks,
"Does it take the wit of the Priestess of Delphi
"To see that I've not done away with myself? I

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“Say you cannot hold me – I must be released!

“This can’t be a murder if I’m the deceased!”

But Holmes warns, “you will still pay the wages of sin:

“You’ll go home and your wife will ask ‘Where have you been?’

“‘I don’t know where you were, but I know where you ain’t! –

“‘But I still love you, Neville!’” – She *must* be a saint!

And so let us all raise a glass in the air:

To the twisted Hugh Boone, and to Mrs. St. Clair.