

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2017-12-3)

A toast to Mrs. Hudson  
by Victoria M. Robinson, MC, ASH, BOTB  
before a meeting of the Sons of the Copper Beeches  
at The Racquet Club of Philadelphia on October 27, 2017

It has been said that behind every great man, is a great man's behind. In the case of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, *Mrs. Martha Hudson* was behind the great man. She helped *make* the great man.

Consider Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy, in which humans have basic, psychological and self-fulfillment needs. They require sustenance, warmth, rest, security and safety; belongingness and esteem, love, intimate relationships, friends, prestige and feeling accomplished. Without these fundamental needs being met, they cannot achieve self-actualization of their full potential. I submit that Mrs. Hudson provided for Holmes' needs, allowing him to become the Great Detective whom we esteem. My magnificent husband has called her the maven who provided the safe haven.

Mrs. Martha Hudson was a capable woman and organizer, with saintly patience. And, sadly, an enabler: She never made Sherlock pick up his things or right his messes; she wove her schedule around his; she sacrificed her desire for order and tidiness to tolerate his chaotic lifestyle, shady guests, foul experiments and bizarre sleep-wake cycle. And she maintained balance with Dr. Watson, her less colorful lodger.

As the Sons of the Copper Beeches branches out to include women—Hear!, Hear! Yay!--, a more modern view of Martha may be considered, as she has evolved since the days of the Canon, in television and screen. Mrs. Hudson is portrayed as having a more familial, almost maternal, relationship with Holmes and Watson. The recent personifications of the stalwart Mrs. H. show her as a self-sufficient woman; she, alone, keeps a house in London; handles the finances and taxes; orders the provisions; maintains cable, satellite and WiFi; keeps her help's personnel records safe and secure from being hacked; and is proficient with Quickbooks and Outlook Calendar. Mrs. Hudson, during whichever era is brave, shrewd and resilient.

What immediately came to my mind was the old hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is our God." With no apology at all to Martin Luther—but definitely to those with perfect pitch-- I offer a musical homage to Mrs. Hudson:

A mighty helpmeet is Martha, a bulwark never failing.

Holmes' helper she, amid the flood of London's evils prevailing.

For still Holmes shoots at her walls.

His experiments are smelly, his disguises are great,

His enemies armed with hate,

In London is not her equal.

Did Sherlock on himself depend, his housekeeping would be losing,

Were not the right woman at his side, the landlady of his choosing:

Dost ask who that may be? Missus Hudson, it is she!

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2017-12-3)

The Patient One her name, from age to age the same,  
And she helps Holmes win The Game.

And though his world, Moriarty-filled,  
Should threaten to undo Holmes,  
He need not fear, for Martha's here,  
And she has kept his papers safe.

The criminals are grim, Holmes trembles not at them,  
He plays his violin and Mrs. Hudson his dinners bring.