DOUBLETS

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A selection from Richards' book *Victorian Enigmas and Sherlockian Puzzles.*

Doublets

It is rare that one can pinpoint when a puzzle or game is created. Lewis Carroll created this entertainment on Christmas Day, 1877, for two little girls who "found nothing to do." He is to have issued a pamphlet entitled "Word-Links" and after publishing the idea in *Vanity Fair* it appeared as a small book, in 1879, under the name of "Doublets." (A detailed discussion of doublets, with facsimiles of the originales, appears in Martin Gardner's book about Carroll, *The Universe in a Handkerchief.*)

The idea of Doublets is familiar to us today. One starts with two words of the same length and tries to transform the first into the second with a chain of intermediate words, each word differing from the previous by replacing exactly one letter. Carroll gave the example:

APE—ARE—ERE—ERR—EAR—MAR—MAN

It is desirable to have the minimum length chain but that is not our goal. (Carroll's example can be improved to APE—APT—OPT—OAT—MAT—MAN). We will give you hints for the links in the chains to make the task easier. You are free to improve upon these chains.

"Over the oak... under the elm" — MUSG

BOOK

OAK

ELM

"Its somewhat ambitious title was "The Book of Life" — STUD

LIFE

"Cyanea! Behold the Lion's Mane!" — LION

LION

MANE

"He was known in the trade as Black Peter" — BLAC

BLACK

PETER

"John H. Watson... Mary Morstan" — SIGN

JOHN

MARY

"[Moran,] your bag of tigers still remains unrivaled?" — EMP

TIGER

MORAN
HOLMES

Sanctuaries
Saintier
Sock seller
Snugger
Salesman
Swivel support
Star
Singer
Swiss state
Sensual

WATTON
WATSON

Watton is a village in East Anglia, Norfolk—no doubt near Riding Thorpe Manor. It seems impossible to reach WATSON without using an obscure proper noun (e.g., Batson, Matson, Gatson, Latson, Wesson, or Wayson). [The clues all start with S for no particular reason.]

DOUBLETs

A WORD PUZZLE

by

LEWIS CARROLL

"Double, double,

Toil and trouble."

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO
1879

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS