DOUBLETS

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Fairfax, Virginia

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 1878 he 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 originals, 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

OAK

_____	fool
_____	peculiar
_____	letter
_____	gnome

ELM

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

BOOK

_____	crow
_____	cheer
_____	crowd
_____	cleft
_____	crawling

LIFE

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

LION

_____	outline
_____	color
_____	act
_____	dig

MANE

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

BLACK

_____	stop
_____	coalitions
_____	daubs
_____	servant
_____	argues
_____	sheds
_____	spies
_____	specks
_____	serves
_____	scansion

PETER

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

JOHN

_____	Splice
_____	Sou
_____	Spiral
_____	Stir
_____	Somersault
_____	Sweetheart
_____	Strip
_____	Stout source
_____	Shop

MARY

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

TIGER

_____	Sandglass
_____	Scheduled
_____	Simulated
_____	Stuck
_____	Sloughs
_____	Set system
_____	Sporogenic specimen
_____	Straight

MORAN

HOLMES

_____	Sanctuaries
_____	Saintlier
_____	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, Wasson, 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