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 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

**OAK**

__________
peculiar

__________
letter
gnome

**ELM**

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

**BOOK**

__________
crow

__________
cheer

__________
crowd

__________
cleft
crawling

**LIFE**

"Cyanal! 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

__________
sansion

**PETER**

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

**JOHN**

__________
splice

__________
son

__________
spiral

__________
sir

__________
somersault

__________
sweetheart

__________
strip

__________
stout source

__________
shop

**MARY**

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

**TIGER**

__________
sandglass

__________
scheduled

__________
simulated

__________
stuck

__________
sloughs

__________
sset system

__________
sporogenic specimen

__________
straight

**MORAN**
WATTON

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.]

DOUBLET

A WORD PUZZLE

BY

LEWIS CARROLL

"Double, double, toil and trouble."

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO
1879

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS