



by Steve Steinbock

It's a new year, and as we once again celebrate the birthday of Sherlock Holmes, we have quite a few new works of Sherlockiana to cover. So come, Watson. The game is afoot.

**** Nicholas Meyer, *The Return of The Pharaoh*, Minotaur Books, \$25.99. While wintering in Egypt with his wife, Dr. John Watson encounters a British colonel who, he quickly realizes, is Sherlock Holmes in disguise. Holmes is in Cairo searching for an errant duke who came to Egypt in search of ancient gold. But what starts as a missing-persons case turns into the solution of a 3,000-year-old murder. Meyer cleverly packages the story as selections from the unpublished papers of John Watson detailing this 1910 adventure. Meyer provides numerous footnotes and photographs of relevant artifacts as Holmes and Watson explore the world of pharaohs during the Eighteenth Dynasty.

**** Sherry Thomas, *Miss Moriarty, I Presume?* Berkley, \$16.00. Charlotte Holmes, who works under the guise of an imaginary "Sherlock Holmes," has a new client who believes his daughter may be a prisoner, or worse, of a religious cult. The complication is that Charlotte's new client is none other than her archnemesis John Moriarty. Charlotte and Mrs. Watson travel to the cult's compound to learn the truth about the young woman. As in all the books in this series, complicated romance and problematic family relationships are just as important as the mystery plot line, and this one is filled with clever pretense punctuated with adventure and an explosive climax.

*** Leonard Goldberg, *The Abduction of Pretty Penny*, Minotaur Books, \$26.99. Joanna Blalock, the biological daughter of Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler, is assisted by her husband Dr. John Watson, Jr. and her father-in-law, the original Dr. Watson, in a case involving the return of Jack the Ripper to the streets of Whitechapel after a twenty-eight-year absence. At the heart of the story is the search for a missing actress who Joanna believes is being held captive by the Ripper. The actress, Penny Martin, is central to the story, but is underdeveloped and doesn't appear until the final pages. Throughout the book she is referred to by the slightly off-putting epithet "Pretty Penny" while her actual surname is only mentioned once. There were a few plot elements that stretched plausibility, and in the end, the solution was predictable. (Continued page 57)