

# ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S PIG, AND YOURS

## A CHALLENGE

[parallel citation: 2016 Green Bag Alm. 537]



*A Conan Doyle*

Ross E. Davies<sup>†</sup>

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, *The Strand Magazine* printed Arthur Conan Doyle's byline many, many times — on dozens of Sherlock Holmes stories, and also on a wide range of other works.<sup>1</sup> Only once, however, did the magazine publish a Doyle-signed work that was purely graphical: the pig (yes, it is a pig) pictured above. He drew the pig in response to a challenge *The Strand* issued to several Victorian-era celebrities. Full details are given in an article — “Pigs of Celebrities,” by Gertrude Bacon — published by *The Strand* in March 1899 (and reprinted on pages 542-546 below).<sup>2</sup> The gist of the challenge is easily summarized:

Lift a pen and close your eyes. Keep them closed while drawing a pig. Autograph your work and send it to us.

The *Green Bag* is renewing that challenge. It is open to all our readers, every one of whom is a celebrity in the eyes of the *Bag's* editors. Please use the form (and follow the rules) on page 547 below. We will: (1) post on our website all, or at least most, pigs submitted in accordance with

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<sup>†</sup> George Mason University law professor and *Green Bag* editor.

<sup>1</sup> See RICHARD LANCELYN GREEN & JOHN MICHAEL GIBSON, A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF A. CONAN DOYLE *passim* (1983; 1st rev. ed. 2000); see also, e.g., DANIEL STASHOWER, TELLER OF TALES: THE LIFE OF ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE 5-6, 121-25, 416 (1999).

<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Bacon, *Pigs of Celebrities*, 17 THE STRAND 338 (Mar. 1899).

the rules (we reserve the right to exclude mean-spirited and copyright-infringing pigs), and (2) publish some exemplary pigs in a future *Almanac & Reader*, or issue of the *Green Bag* itself, or perhaps both.

This year's *Green Bag Almanac & Reader* is an especially appropriate forum in which to revive *The Strand's* "blindfold pigs" project, because of the common ground shared by Arthur Conan Doyle and Gertrude Bacon in their respective works republished here. Both authors seriously yet entertainingly emphasize the value of attending to the way people express themselves in ink, on paper. Compare for example, this passage from "The Reigate Puzzle" (pages 156-157 above), in which Sherlock Holmes analyzes the handwriting of the nefarious Cunninghams, . . .

"We come now, however, to a point which is of importance. You may not be aware that the deduction of a man's age from his writing is one which has been brought to considerable accuracy by experts. In normal cases one can place a man in his true decade with tolerable confidence. I say normal cases, because ill health and physical weakness reproduce the signs of old age even when the invalid is a youth. In this case, looking at the bold strong hand of the one and the rather broken-backed appearance of the other, which still retains its legibility, although the t's have begun to lose their crossing, we can say that the one was a young man and the other was advanced in years, without being positively decrepit."

"Excellent!" cried Mr. Acton again.

"There is a further point, however, which is subtler and of greater interest. There is something in common between these hands. They belong to men who are blood-relatives. It may be most obvious to you in the Greek e's, but to me there are many small points which indicate the same thing. I have no doubt at all that a family mannerism can be traced in these two specimens of writing. I am only, of course, giving you the leading results now of my examinations, which would be of more interest to experts than to you. They all tended to deepen the impression upon my mind that the Cunninghams had written this letter.["]<sup>3</sup>

. . . with this passage from "Pigs of Celebrities" (page 542 below) . . .

To those who make a study of calligraphy it seems that the handwriting affords an index to character to be almost implicitly relied on, and to these students, as well as in a lesser degree the casual

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<sup>3</sup> See also WILLIAM S. BARING-GOULD, 1 *THE ANNOTATED SHERLOCK HOLMES* 342-43 (2d ed. 1972); cf. L.S. Holstein, *The Puzzle of Reigate*, 2 *BAKER STREET J.* 221 (Oct. 1952).

observer, a glance at the drawings which accompany these words will, I think, sufficiently satisfy them that, in an almost greater degree, the blindfold pigs exemplify the teaching of the autographs below.

In addition, there is the inclusion of Conan Doyle's pig and autograph in Bacon's article (see pages 537 above and 545 below), accompanied by her analysis of his work:

Turning to the "pig literary," he must be wanting in imagination indeed who fails to trace in Dr. Conan Doyle's spirited little sketch the resemblance to the immortal and lamented Sherlock Holmes. That pig is evidently "on the scent" of some baffling mystery. Note the quick and penetrating snout, the alert ears, thrown back in the act of listening, the nervous, sensitive tail, and the expectant, eager attitude. The spirit of the great detective breathes in every line and animates the whole.

So, what better place and time could there be to bring back the "blindfold pigs" than right here and now?

For the dignified reader who might be hesitant about drawing a pig, consider this: Both Mary Jeune and Francis Jeune participated in *The Strand's* pig project (see page 543 below). In 1899, at the time they were drawing pigs for *The Strand*, Mary was a prominent public figure — a well-published author, activist, and charity organizer (she would later serve as an alderman on the London County Council, beginning in 1910)<sup>4</sup> — and Francis was a judge of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of Her Majesty's High Court of Justice (a post he would continue to hold until he retired from public life in 1905).<sup>5</sup> Even *Green Bag* readers in the most elevated positions at the bar, in industry, in government, in the academy, or elsewhere should feel comfortable in the company of the Jeunes and other eminent Victorian pig artists represented in the following pages.

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<sup>4</sup> William A. Davis, *Mary Jeune, Late-Victorian Essayist: Fallen Women, New Women, and Poor Children*, 58 ENGLISH LITERATURE IN TRANSITION, 1880-1920, at 181 (2015); *Lady St. Helier Dies*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 26, 1931, at 17; see, also, e.g., Lady Jeune, *London Society*, 154 NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW 603 (Feb. 1892); LADY JEUNE, LESSER QUESTIONS (1894); *London Society Fifty Years Ago*, N.Y. TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW OF BOOKS, Nov. 6, 1909, at 688.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Stephen (rev. Sinéad Agnew), *Jeune, Francis Henry, Baron St Helier (1843-1905)*, OXFORD DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY (2004; online ed. May 2015, Jan. 25, 2016), www.oxforddnb.com.

A final point: For readers seeking a leg up in what some may view — incorrectly — as a pig portraiture competition, we have advice offered by an expert, Harry Furniss, in the April 1899 issue of *The Strand*:



MR. HARRY FURNISS ON "BLINDFOLD PIGS."

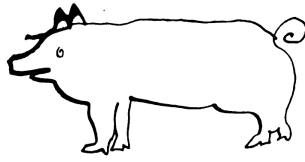
At the end of an article last month on pigs drawn blindfold by various celebrated people, we promised to give in this issue the very interesting letter and sketches by which Mr. Harry Furniss exemplified his method of drawing such pigs with almost as much accuracy as when the eyes are open. Mr. Furniss's letter runs as follows: "With pleasure, I inclose my first attempt for you, but it is by no means my best blind pig. I have a trick in drawing with my eyes shut. It is not a difficult one — perhaps you would like to try it. Simply *use your left hand as a guide*. In drawing a pig with your eyes shut, use the *little finger* of the left hand to start from, by touch. (Keep the left hand on the paper firmly.) Begin with the ears of the pig, then the head, legs, tail — and you can then feel the pen travelling along the back till it comes over the little finger again. Then you have the eye a little lower. Don't give this away till you have your piggery full. Wishing you every success.

— Believe me, yours sincerely, HARRY FURNISS."<sup>6</sup>

Furniss was a thoroughly credible authority on drawing things. He had spent the better part of the 1870s, '80s, and '90s as a popular contributor of caricatures and other illustrations to leading periodicals such as *Punch*, *Vanity Fair*, and the *Illustrated London News*, as well as to his own publishing enterprises. He would remain an active artist and lecturer (and, eventually, actor, as he embraced the new media of his day) for

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<sup>6</sup> *Curiosities*, 17 THE STRAND 491 (Apr. 1899).



*Henry Furniss*

two decades after drawing his pig. He spent most of his career in London. But late in life he visited the United States for a couple of years, during which he worked for Thomas Edison, and then returned to England before the outbreak of World War I.<sup>7</sup>

Now it is your turn to put pen to paper (or tablet), or cursor to screen.

### PIGS AT REST, AND ON THE MOVE

This is just a reminder — for our readers who may not have found themselves in the company of pigs recently — of what those wonderful creatures really look like. This offer is made with all due respect to the images on the next few pages, and to the people who created them:



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<sup>7</sup> John Jensen, *Furniss, Henry [pseud. Lika Joko] (1854-1925)*, OXFORD DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY (2004; online ed. Jan. 2011, Jan. 25, 2016), [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com).

*Pigs of Celebrities.*

BY GERTRUDE BACON.



HERE is ever a fascination in collections, and ours is, perhaps, a more essentially collecting age than any other. We collect all the things that our forefathers used to—pictures, books, plate, and other articles of *virtu*: and we have added to them a number of quite new ideas of our own—stamps, post-cards, railway-tickets, buttons, and what not, whose chief value would appear to lie in their strange character and utter uselessness.

But now, as always, the palm of collections is universally accorded to those of personal relics of the great, and the fact that these are hard to come by only enhances their value; which value too is immensely increased on the death of the original owners. Very often indeed it is then only that they acquire any worth at all. For example, Lord Nelson's coat may now be well-nigh priceless, may form a worthy gift to the Sovereign herself; while the coats that the great sailor gave away during his lifetime descended to the rag-man in natural course, as those of his humblest lieutenant. This is one of the difficulties in the way of those who would fain form collections of mementos of yet living celebrities, and to the great majority of these, as in past days, the only course open is autograph-hunting.

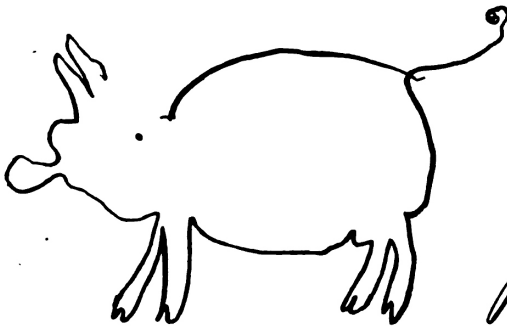
Autographs possess certainly a very great advantage over many other souvenirs. They are lasting, they are portable, and they are eminently characteristic, which is more than can be said of snuff-boxes and old clothes. They, moreover, lie more or less within the reach of those whose worldly means may not be great, but who possess a fair amount of perseverance and self-assurance. The name of these is legion, as every celebrity knows only to his cost, and we may well believe that the information regarding autograph-hunters, which might be supplied by distinguished people, would be not only extremely interesting, but also somewhat startling in its nature.

Of course, there are various species of autograph collections. There is the autographed book, with "the author's compliments" on the fly-leaf. This is particularly

attractive and valuable, and not to be lightly come by; but then all geniuses are not literary men, any more than all literary men are geniuses. There is likewise the autographed photograph, most delightful form of all, for besides perpetuating the face as well as the handwriting, its possession usually indicates a certain amount of personal friendship between giver and receiver. The following pages are intended to show yet another variety that the collection may assume, and which, among other advantages, may, at least, claim for itself a share of novelty and originality.

It consists, in short, of a number of drawings of that familiar animal the pig, drawn with the eyes shut, by leading representatives of science, art, literature, society, etc., whose world-wide renown is only equalled by their ready kindness and courtesy in ministering to the pleasure and benefit of those around them, and their exceeding indulgence in yielding to an audacious request. The idea, of course, originates in the old drawing-room game, though as a *bonâ-fide* collection is less often seen than its obvious advantages would seem to warrant.

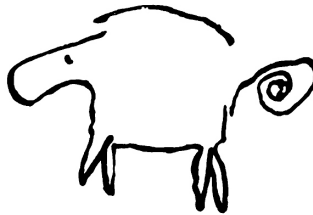
Carlyle says that, given a hero, or in other words a genius, it is only a question of his environment whether he will develop "into a poet, prophet, King, priest, or what you will." The vital spark is there, and will assert itself, no matter into what lines it falls. In a similar manner, granted a man of genius and strong personality, then everything about him and every action, however slight, he performs will bear the unmistakable imprint of his great characteristic. It is no hard task to read a man's character in his face, but, as has been before exemplified in these pages, it is equally possible to do so from his hands and ears. To those who make a study of calligraphy it seems that the handwriting affords an index to character to be almost implicitly relied on, and to these students, as well as in a lesser degree the casual observer, a glance at the drawings which accompany these words will, I think, sufficiently satisfy them that, in an almost greater degree, the blindfold pigs exemplify the teaching of the autographs below.



LORD ROBERTS'S FIG.

Roberts

Take the first specimen for example, which Lord Roberts so graciously consented to draw for this article. Is it possible to conceive an animal more endowed with the martial spirit of its noble artist? It is essentially and above all a *fighting* pig. Note the firmly planted feet, the aggressively forward sloping ears, the quick eye, the stubborn, determined face, and pugnacious tail. The whole attitude is instinct with pluck and defiance. This animal is "game" to the last; he has also undoubtedly "got his back up." That Lord Roberts has paid particular and unusual attention to the "trotters" indicates a careful and observant eye, a keen sense of what is right and fitting, and an untiring attention to details, while the fact



F. H. J.

SIR FRANCIS JEUNE'S FIG.

familiar initials beneath. It is in all respects a "carefully balanced" animal, and there is no mistaking the shrewdness and penetration of the eye. There is no wandering from the point, no unnecessary digressions and flourishes. The very gait suggests the even course of justice, not prone to jump to rash conclusions, not to be unduly hastened, but with patient and cautious footsteps progressing slowly and surely and impartially to the goal of equity and truth.



May Jeune

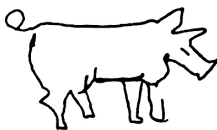
LADY JEUNE'S FIG.

The companion drawing is by the famous judge's equally famous wife. Those among Lady Jeune's admirers (and who are they who do not reckon themselves in that great army?) will welcome its presence as a fresh instance of her ladyship's never-failing kindness and graciousness; while recognising in it indications of those social and intellectual gifts that render her alike the model hostess, the leader of society, the greatest authority on every branch of women's life and work, and the prime mover in every good scheme for the ameli-

oration and benefit of her poorer neighbours. A peculiarity about this animal, shared only by Professor Ramsay's, is that it turns its head to the right, the reverse position to that naturally given to a pig when drawn with the right hand.

The kindness of the Bishop of Brechin in allowing his pig to adorn these pages will be appreciated by all. The popular and revered Primus of Scotland displays in his drawing those kindly and genial traits which have endeared him to all throughout an active and varied career.

Turn we now to the "pig scientific,"



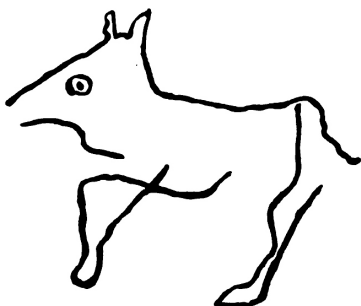
*William Ramsay*

PROFESSOR RAMSAY'S PIG.

seems to have forgotten the ears, as, too, oddly enough, has Sir Francis Jeune, a curious omission in his case, for if justice be blind it is certainly not deaf.

The extreme excellence of Professor Ramsay's pig leads one almost to the suspicion that the great chemist had a corner of one eye open when he drew it, or else possessed a Röntgen-ray-like power of seeing through closed lids; but in this I may be doing him injustice. That his animal possesses a most fascinating personality no one will deny. There are indications of extreme modesty about the lowered head, downward sloping ears, and half-shut eye, while a capacity for taking infinite pains, minute attention to details, and the power of laborious research is as plainly evident in the talented little sketch as in the famous discoverer of Argon, Krypton, and the other rare constituents of the atmosphere himself.

*Herbert W. Prentiss*



THE BISHOP OF BRECHIN'S PIG.

luckily represented in the two great branches of Astronomy and Chemistry, by Sir Robert Ball and Professor Ramsay. The renowned astronomer, author, lecturer, and most genial of men draws us a pig, in which he himself would be the first to trace its Irish antecedents. The keen eye of the star-gazer is there, and the fine, tapering snout that indicates the man of letters. Sir Robert



*Henry Irving*

SIR HENRY IRVING'S PIG.

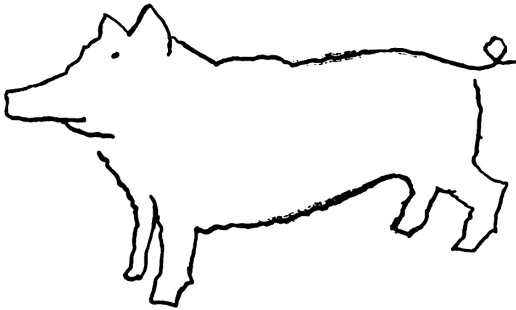
Again, in the "pig histrionic" what can be more apparent than the tragic tendency it has unconsciously received from the hand of the greatest of tragedians? Sir Henry Irving has instilled a pathos and despair into the expression of his pig that the jocund and



*Robert Ball*

SIR ROBERT BALL'S PIG.





John Tenniel

SIR JOHN TENNIEL'S PIG.

light-hearted animal can scarcely display in real life. But to Sir Henry himself it is the tail that appeals most. "It may be vanity," he writes, "but I cannot help regarding it as a masterpiece," and in this opinion admiring and grateful beholders will readily acquiesce.

An unfortunate diffidence has robbed this article of another famous actor's pig, Mr. Wyndham writing in response to an appeal that he "cannot draw with his eyes open, let alone if they were closed." Sir Evelyn Wood too replied in almost the same words. These gentlemen unfortunately did not know that the less capable you are of drawing a pig with eyes open the better one you will probably produce with eyes shut. An ardent collector will never accept as an excuse an alleged incapacity for drawing. Very frequently the objector possesses a latent talent which he either conceals from modesty or else is unconscious of; and in any case the chances are that he will produce an animal that will surprise him very much by its excellence.

Certain it is that, the better a man draws, the harder work it is to coax a pig out of him. To get a blindfold pig from a celebrated artist is rare indeed, and I doubt whether an R.A. has ever been known to draw one. We may feel the more grateful, then, to that famous veteran, Sir John Tenniel, for his unexampled goodness in giving us a specimen from his own unrivalled

pencil. It is the work of an artist, indeed, and even Sir John himself seems rather proud of it; for he writes: "I have much pleasure in sending you my picture of a 'Piggee,' drawn in pencil (blindfold), and duly signed. The result, as I need hardly say, fills me with wonder and admiration. It is simply an amazing fluke." He further adds that he will never attempt another, but we will venture to disagree with him as to the fluke, believing that whatever comes from that deft pen will inevitably be the best possible.

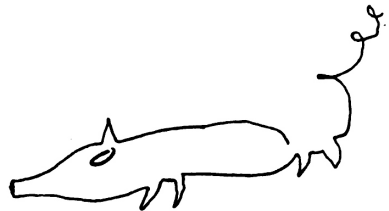
Turning to the "pig literary," he must be wanting in imagination indeed who fails to trace in Dr. Conan Doyle's spirited little sketch the resemblance to the immortal and lamented Sherlock Holmes. That pig is evidently "on the scent" of some baffling mystery. Note the quick and penetrating snout, the alert ears, thrown back in the act of listening, the nervous, sensitive tail, and the expectant, eager attitude. The spirit of the great detective breathes in every line and animates the whole.

Nor is the indication of patient and deep research, literary skill, and subtle imagination less apparent in the animal Sir Walter Besant has favoured us with. The absence of the



A Conan Doyle

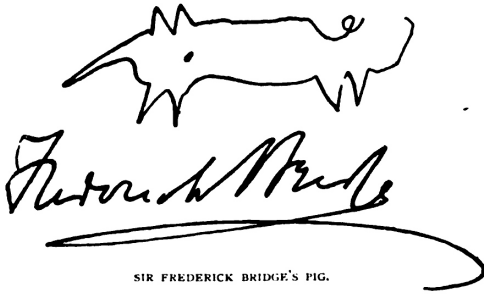
DR. CONAN DOYLE'S PIG.



Walter Besant

Dec. 5. 1895.

SIR WALTER BESANT'S PIG.



SIR FREDERICK BRIDGE'S FIG.

second ear is, doubtless, to be accounted for by its being directly behind the other.

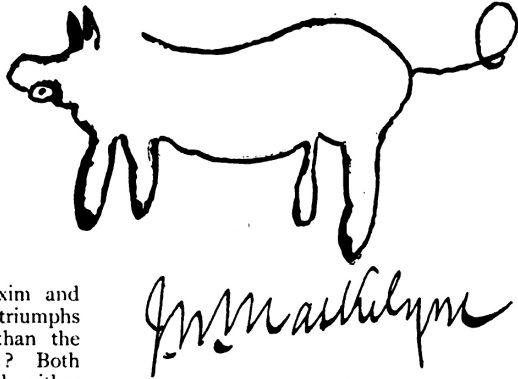
On the contrary, the ears drawn by Sir Frederick Bridge are both well defined. This, of course, is only what would be looked for in the animal of a composer. Note the deep-set eye. That in a human being is generally considered a mark of a mathematical mind, and music and mathematics are proverbially associated. The gait of this pig, too, is undoubtedly "andante."

In the "pigs mechanical" we have been lucky, indeed, in securing the work of two such mighty masters of their art as Mr. Maxim and Mr. Maskelyne. What two greater triumphs of human ingenuity can we find than the Maxim gun and the "Box trick"? Both are mechanical problems, for which either

mechanician may well envy the other, while the ordinary intellect stands amazed before such inventive genius.

Referring to his pig, Mr. Maxim writes; "I have just a suspicion that the pigs that are so well drawn in your album are by people who had their eyes partly open. The trouble with my pig is that my eyes were too tightly closed." But nobody will find fault with Mr. Maxim's animal on this score or on any other. It bears

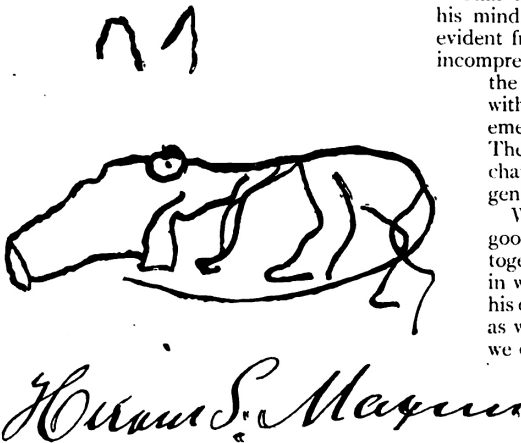
the imprint of his matchless genius, and is certainly suggestive of the action of his incomparable gun.



MR. MASKELYNE'S FIG.

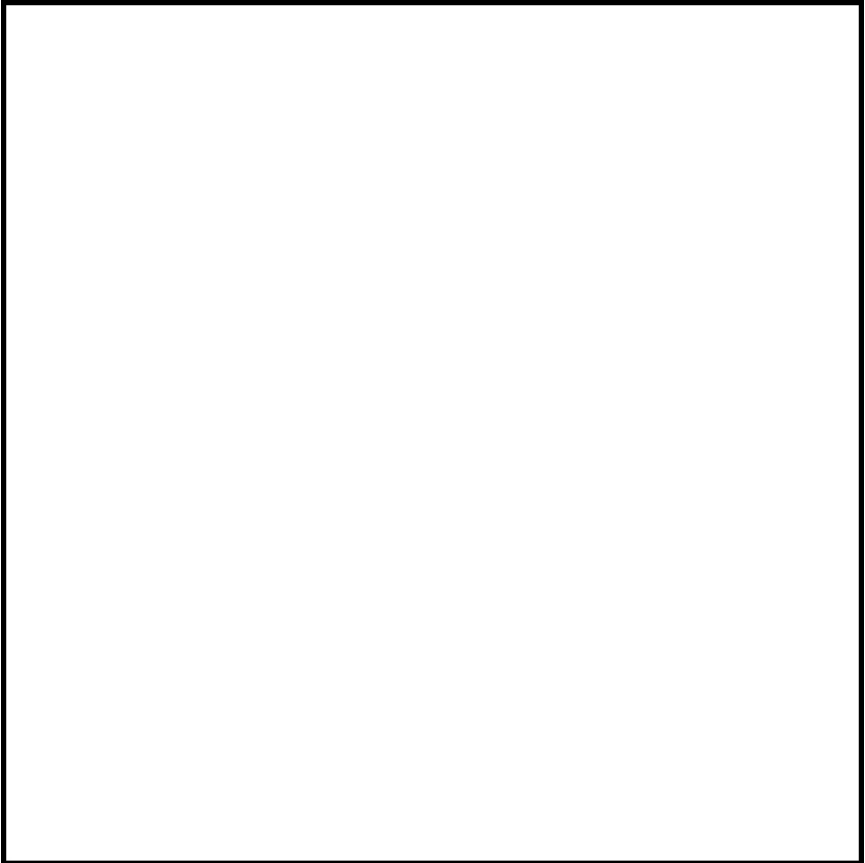
That Mr. Maskelyne had the box trick in his mind when he drew his shapely pig is evident from the resemblance it bears to the incomprehensible creature known generally as the "monkey," but sometimes credited with being something more, that emerges from that unfathomed mystery. The animal otherwise is eminently characteristic of one of the most ingenious, genial, and generous of men.

We have also received a remarkably good pig from Mr. Harry Furniss, together with a most interesting letter in which Mr. Furniss reveals a secret of his own for drawing pigs blindfold almost as well as when the eyes are open. As we do not wish to give away this secret before our readers have had an opportunity of trying what they can do in the ordinary way, we reserve Mr. Furniss's letter and drawings for publication next month.



MR. MAXIM'S FIG.

## GREEN BAG PIG FORM



### The Rules:

- 1) With your eyes closed, draw a pig in the box above. No peeking.
- 2) With your eyes open or closed, add your autograph. It must fit in the box, with the pig, and it must be legible, or at least not entirely illegible.
- 3) Both pig and autograph must be drawn in blue, green, or purple ink. Or pink.
- 4) Mail this form to the *Green Bag* at 6600 Barnaby St. NW, Washington, DC, 20015, or email a color picture of it (scan or photo) to [editors@greenbag.org](mailto:editors@greenbag.org).
- 5) By sending this form (or a picture of it) to the *Green Bag* you are giving us a free, irrevocable, unlimited, intergalactic license to use it any way we want to, including letting others use it. If you want a copyright notice to accompany your pig, write it in the box, with the pig, in the same color as the pig.