



Canadian Holmes

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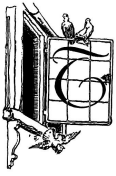
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One-hundred seventy sixth issue

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Graces of Bootprints

Art in the blood and on the cover

The old adage of not judging a book by its cover can, of course, be reflected on magazines and journals. However, with *Canadian Holmes*, our covers let everyone know at a glance that this is a journal dedicated to Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and even the Victorian era.

Much thought goes into the cover image for each issue. As the first thing the reader sees it has to be as good and as impressive as any of the articles between the covers. This issue's cover art is by Japanese Sherlockian Enokoro Koubou. This is her third *Canadian Holmes* cover and we think you will agree that this measure of appreciation is well deserved. Enokoro Koubou has an extensive art background, and artwork from her books can be found at her Twitter feed [@enokoro1999_e](#).

Our last issue had cover artwork by Amanda Downs that garnered much positive feedback online. Your editors search the world for artists and Sherlockian artwork; to us, these works are just as important as the work inside.

In this issue we have lots of contributions from Bootmakers along with Sherlockians further afield. In her Bow Window column, Barbara Rusch turns her attention to telecommunications. This is followed by a look at science and Sherlock Holmes by American Sherlockian Dana Richards. Clifford Goldfarb and Hartley R. Nathan then step into the squared circle for a ringside examination of Conan Doyle and boxing. While reading it be careful of Holmes's left jab and don't let it land or else you will be taken home in a dog cart like Roaring Jack Woodley. "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" and the role of love and romance is next up with an article by Karen Campbell. Ray Rawlings then has a look at Charlie Chaplin and how Sherlock Holmes influenced the little tramp's legendary career. Ian Bennett of London Ontario goes under the Sherlockian microscope in this issue's Strictly Personal. We round off the issue with Mark Jones's look at "The Story of the Sealed Room," a few reviews and Diary Notes. We hope you will enjoy this issue from the cover art to the last page of text.

The view from the bow window

Barbara Rusch explores various aspects of Victorian and Edwardian life as they relate to the canonical tales. Bow Window illustration by Laurie Fraser Manifold.



Of all the advances in technology and industry that defined the Victorian age, perhaps none was of greater consequence than in the field of telecommunications. It took centuries for humankind to progress from smoke signals and semaphores to the American Pony Express which carried mail and information from far-flung points in a rapidly expanding west. But everything changed with the invention of the telegraph. “The pony was fast,” noted one contemporary observer, “but it could not compete with lightning.”

Samuel Morse developed the technology for the telegraph, the first instantaneous form of communication, in 1830. A practical working model transmitted an ingeniously coded system of dots and dashes which soon became known as Morse code, while electrical current powered by batteries carried messages over wires connected by a series of poles. The first message, dispatched from Washington to Baltimore, read, “What hath God wrought?” The new technology provided immediate advantages for the world of finance, transformed how wars were fought, and revolutionized journalism. By 1866, after a few false starts, Cyrus Field’s Atlantic Telegraph Company succeeded in laying the first transatlantic cable from Ireland to Newfoundland. The first message, sent from Queen Victoria to U.S. President James Buchanan, expressed the hope that the cable would prove “an additional link between the nations whose friendship is founded on their common interest and reciprocal esteem.” Heartfelt sentiments indeed, though the Queen’s message, consisting of 98 words, took an astounding 16 hours to transmit! Improvements continued to be made, while the masthead of *The Telegrapher* newspaper optimistically read, “Is it not a feat sublime? Intellect hath conquered time.”

But it was the telephone that enabled widespread instantaneous communications between ordinary citizens, becoming a household utility offering privacy, convenience and a resource in emergencies. It was Alexander Graham Bell, a teacher of the deaf whose mother and wife were

both hard of hearing, who foresaw an instrument for transmitting the human voice in every home. The first words uttered by telephone took place in 1876, a summons by Bell to his assistant, Watson (every innovative genius should have one). “Mr. Watson, come here – I want to see you.” Within a few years, telephones, connected by wires to specially constructed poles, were a commonplace sight across Europe and North America, though “a certain gracious lady,” who loathed the instrument, avoided having one installed in the palace until 1896.

Being a man of science, Sherlock Holmes embraced the new technology, applying the inventions and innovations to the art of criminal detection. There are 37 references to either sending or receiving telegrams, at times to clients, though often to either local law enforcement or to the United States, requesting information on suspected criminals such as Joseph Stangerson, Enoch Drebber and Abe Slaney. Watson tells us that Holmes has never been known to write where a telegram would serve, and his laconic messages are often of a mundane variety, urgently requesting Watson to “Come at once if convenient – if inconvenient come all the same.” Apparently, telegrams can also offer valuable insight into human nature, for instance that “no woman would ever send a reply-paid telegram. She would come.” Holmes often asks Watson in his capacity as a “conductor of light” and “whetstone for his mind,” to read telegrams aloud to him, allowing him to process the information being conveyed, while extrapolating on their larger implications. He regularly avails himself of the telephone as well, to which there are 10 Canonical references. Sir James Damery’s emergency number at the Carlton Club is XX.31.

Clearly the quickest and surest way for Holmes to disseminate sensitive information is by telegraph, telephone or tell a Watson!



1900 sheet music cover, “Dawn of the Century,” featuring important inventions of the previous 100 years, including the telegraph and telephone. From the author’s collection.

Science and Sherlock Holmes

By Dana Richards

Dana Richards is a professor of Computer Science at George Mason University. He has contributed to Sherlockian literature for 45 years, focusing on the intellectual world of Sherlock Holmes. His previous contribution to Canadian Holmes focused on puzzles. Dana will be the next Cameron Hollyer Memorial Lecturer, speaking on November 4, 2023.

Editors' Note: This paper was first presented at a seminar titled "Intellectual Life in the Schools," August 1997, and contains several paragraphs from the author's earlier papers: "Holmes' Axiom," "Doyle in the Land of Od," and "Scholars and Scholarship in the Canon." A version of this article first appeared in the Shoso-in Bulletin Vol. 9, 1999.

There is an undercurrent of science that runs through the Canon. While it would be a mistake to say that Holmes was a scientist, *per se*, it is interesting to see how Holmes figured as an exemplar of the Victorian ideal of science. From the first mention of Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*, the die is cast. Stamford describes Holmes to Watson as:

an enthusiast in some branches of science ... I believe he is well up in anatomy, and he is a first-class chemist. Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes. ... He seems to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge.

In this article I will argue that not only was Holmes an icon of Victorian science, he was also a more modern figure. By avoiding a single conclusion I have the luxury of exploring why Holmes attracts attention in different ways.

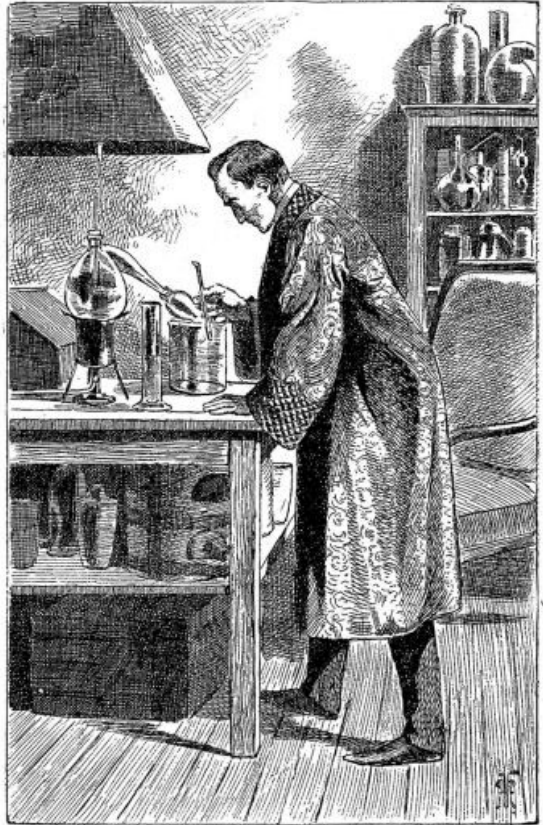
Holmes as Scientist

Holmes never labels himself a scientist but he clearly regards his work as a scientific enterprise: "Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner" (*The Sign of Four*). It is therefore striking that none of the 60 cases Watson recorded were solved by appeals to traditional science (though some unrecorded cases seem to have been). In a 1991 *Baker Street Journal* article, Reggie Hudson (1) put forward the interesting hypothesis that this is due, in part, to Holmes feeling that the public could not appreciate such cases: "Pshaw,

my dear fellow, what do the public, the great unobservant public care about the finer shades of analysis and deduction,” says Holmes in “The Copper Beeches.” However, the Canon is rife with examples of Holmes thinking like a scientist, applying scientific methodologies in nearly every case.

Holmes’s knowledge of science was first detailed in Watson’s list “Sherlock Holmes – his limits” which records that his knowledge of astronomy was “nil,” of botany was “variable,” of geology was “practical but limited,” of chemistry was “profound,” and of anatomy was “accurate but unsystematic.” Much ink has been spilled over the years by Sherlockian scholars, arguing that Holmes was well up on X, or that he was inexcusably ignorant of Y. No less than Isaac Asimov wrote on this theme in 1980 (2). The core question below is not whether he was a scientist, but did he act like a scientist?

It must be remarked that scientific knowledge in Victorian times was based on some principles that today we regard as wrong. When Holmes deduces in “The Blue Carbuncle” that Henry Baker is intelligent since “a man with so large a brain must have something in it,” he is accurately reflecting the prevalent wisdom of the time. The widely respected work of Broca and others argued that intelligence could be determined via craniometry, and Lombroso had extended the hypothesis to include a



“Holmes was working hard over a chemical investigation,” from “The Adventure of the Naval Treaty.” This illustration is by Martin Van Maële for Société d’Édition et de Publications, 1906.

correlation between criminal tendencies and atavistic skulls, though this was more controversial. Further, Holmes's opinions on hereditary tendencies was coloured by a relatively naïve Victorian view of Darwinian theory.

While Holmes may not have been a chemist or a biologist, he does have the distinction of helping to start the new field of "forensic science." Alphonse Bertillon, one of the first and most influential criminologists, was held in low regard by Holmes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* but later Holmes admired him in "The Naval Treaty." Bertillon later stated "Sherlock Holmes sometimes confuses certainty with presumption, but there is analytic genius there, and a vision of the future of the scientific police." (3) Sir Sidney Smith, the famous British forensic pathologist, said: "Today criminal investigation is a science ... This was not always so and the change owes much to the influence of Sherlock Holmes." (4) So, with hindsight we can say that Holmes was a scientist after all, a forensic scientist.

Victorian Science

What is a "scientist?" That is not an easy question to reach agreement on today, and it is even more difficult when we harken back to Victorian times. The reign of Victoria saw many social and political changes; it also saw dramatic changes in the intellectual life of England. Therefore, when Holmes was at his zenith there were competing views of science and intellectual pursuits, and all of these can be found in the Canon.

This change was discussed at length by T. W. Heyck (5). Heyck sees the transformation as being driven by many forces. A principle force was the desire for intellectuals to become professionals. The way was led by scientists and soon other scholars (such as historians) followed, often explicitly emulating scientists. Professionalism was previously an avenue to gentrification that was open to only a few (namely the clergy, lawyers, and doctors). As the middle class grew it was clear to some that other scholastic pursuits should be regarded as professions, and hence above the increasingly common middle class.

The term "scientist" was coined in 1840 to help give the emerging professionals an identity. The pursuit of science was not new, but it had nearly always been done by men in other professions. English science was dominated by devoted amateurs. Before 1850 essentially no science was done in academia in England. There were fewer than 10 professors of science at Oxford and Cambridge, the only two true universities in England at the time. However, the many amateur scientists met regularly

at various so-called “Literary and Philosophical” societies that thrived in provincial cities.

There are several such amateur scientists in the Canon. Nathan Garrideb’s home reflected he was an amateur scientist; he had flint instruments, fossil bones, prehistoric skulls, and butterflies. Sir Charles Baskerville, James Mortimer, Frankland, and Jack Stapleton often would meet together. We are told of their “community of interests in science” that led to “many a charming evening . . . spent together discussing the comparative anatomy of the Bushman and the Hottentot.” Sir Charles was the collector of the South African skulls. Mortimer describes himself as “a dabbler in science ... a picker up of shells on the shores of the great unknown ocean.” He personally excavated a prehistoric skull at Long Down. Frankland was “an amateur astronomer” and Stapleton was a lepidopterist.

Another change in Victorian science could be found in academia. The Oxbridge universities were slow to respond to the changing times. They were grounded in an education in the classics and orthodoxy prevailed. Around 1830, University College and King’s College opened their doors in London using the Continental model, discussed below, and in 1836 were joined into the University of London. Before the transformation of Oxbridge occurred, other institutions began to spring up to take advantage of the interest in science, especially the practical research sciences. They followed the example of Owens College, founded in Manchester in 1851. “In the latter half of the century the ‘red brick’ universities replaced the old literary and philosophical societies as the principal locations of professional science and scientists in the provinces...the [societies] were left to the amateurs.” (6) Due to the pressures of other universities and internal pressure from the growing number of scientists by the end of Victoria’s reign, the Oxbridge universities had become more research oriented.

Yet another change resulted from the acceptance of the “Continental model” of scholarship. Victorian science was originally grounded in natural theology, whereby both applied and theoretical science were seen as important efforts to understand the divine plan of nature. Whether it was the collecting of specimens or chemical research to support industry, science was always given a moral base.

The Continental model, principally from Germany, saw scholarship as an end unto itself. Research was not meant to advance an agenda and so would be unbiased and hence reliable. It would work from original sources, not hearsay, and would be, in sum, “disinterested.” This style of scholarship applied to history and other scholarly pursuits but it had a

clarifying effect on science. It first was accepted in Scotland in the early 1800s, then later at the red-brick universities and still later at the Oxbridge universities.

That the Continental model was regarded as the ideal can be seen in the Canon. In “The Missing Three Quarter,” Dr. Leslie Armstrong, of Cambridge, was clearly a scholar: “he [was] not only one of the heads of the medical school at the University, but a thinker of European reputation in more than one branch of science.” Holmes thought him to be the intellectual equal of Moriarty. The other Oxbridge professor in the Canon was Professor Presbury, the famous physiologist. Presbury, we are told in “The Creeping Man,” was also “a man of European reputation.” As another indication that the European yardstick was the best measure of scholarship, recall that Moriarty’s treatise was considered impressive as it



William Gillette in the lead role in the 1916 film Sherlock Holmes, surrounded by his scientific apparatus.

“enjoyed a European vogue.” The popular conception of science became identified with the impartial following of facts.

Holmes and Victorian Science

In some ways Holmes was the classic amateur scientist/scholar. He pursued many inquiries as an amateur and was intent on sharing his findings through his monographs (and perhaps reading them to some of the societies). The subjects of the monographs include: early English charters, the polyphonic motets of Lassus, the dating of documents, the Chaldean roots in the ancient Cornish language, and observations on the segregation of the queen bee.

However, on the subject of detection we get a different perspective. He was described as an “amateur” detective but this was merely a reflection of his distance from the official police force. In fact, Holmes’s actions can best be understood as a parallel to the professionalization of science. He was not a dilettante when it came to criminology; his goal was to put detection on a firm scientific basis. He himself collected and sorted a vast array of original sources. Further he wrote several monographs intended to initiate a new sense of scholarship, which was successful to the extent that we know they were translated into French. At least one of his efforts was found in the more widely read *Anthropological Journal*. His efforts included monographs on: the human ear, tracing of footsteps, malingering, secret writings including 160 ciphers, tattoo marks, influence of a trade upon the form of a hand, the typewriter and its relation to crime, uses of dogs in detection, and the distinction between the ashes of various tobaccos.

With respect to the change in academia, Holmes’s actions are clear. He only spent a couple of years at university. Clearly he did not find the Oxbridge atmosphere of the 1870s, when it was still in transition into research-oriented times, to be conducive to the practical scholarship he yearned for. Holmes came to London where there were many learned societies and, of course, the reading room at the British Museum, around the corner from where he first took rooms.

Finally, with respect to the change from natural theology to the Continental model, we find Holmes solidly behind the latter. The only nod to the former approach can be found in his remarks on the spirituality of a moss rose. He was attracted by knowledge for its own sake, “disinterested” research. He felt one must study original sources, one must report the facts as they are, in a “cold and unemotional manner,” and one must follow the scientific model in all intellectual pursuits.

Part of Holmes's appeal was that he was a specialist and a generalist, he was an amateur even while creating his own profession, and his views were permeated by the disinterested ideal of a scientist.

Conan Doyle and Science

Arthur Conan Doyle is often accused of harboring unscientific views, especially in his final years when promoting the spiritualist cause. As a result, it is felt that his creation of a scientific hero is inexplicable. The obvious response is that his views changed after he created Holmes but I contend that Conan Doyle's views of science were always supportive and were unaltered.

Clearly Conan Doyle's medical education exposed him to the details of various sciences, principally chemistry. While Victorian medicine was based more on anecdotal evidence, rather than on the scientific method, it seems clear that his education was somewhat different. First, since Scotland had embraced the Continental model at least 50 years earlier, an education at the University of Edinburgh would have trained him with the advantages of objective and disinterested inquiry. Second, his teacher and mentor Dr. Joseph Bell possessed a nearly legendary power of observation and inference. There are striking parallels between a diagnostician and the scientist who creates and tests theories.

In any event Conan Doyle, like most Victorians – both intellectuals and the public – was deeply impressed by the success of science. Science not only provided the underpinnings of the technology that was revolutionizing their lives, but it also was increasingly called upon to explain the world around them. Perhaps the most striking example of this can be found in the paradoxical outlook of the spiritualist movement. Even though it seems that a movement that was centred on the supernatural would abandon science, the opposite was true. So great was the Victorian admiration of science that it became the cornerstone of the movement; so much so that it should be believed solely because it was proven scientifically!

In 1883, Conan Doyle wrote a letter to the *Journal of Photography* (7) in which he attacked the fanciful theory that “Odic” forces could impart colour onto black and white photographs. The key point is that the acerbic letter was not an attack on pseudo-scientific beliefs, as much as it was an expression of his outrage when “scientific errors appear in an eminent scientific journal.” He was to hold this view throughout his life and felt that his decisions would be found tenable by scientific minds. In his famous 1887 letter to the psychic journal *Light*, Conan Doyle stated “the humble enquirer ... yearns for some proof which shall be decided enough

to convince his reason.” And in the appendix to *The Land of the Mist*, he lauded a spiritualist: “With rare judgment he never went further than the facts carried, and never flinched from the furthest point which reason and the evidence would justify.” In short, he never abandoned his faith in the explanatory power of science, even while losing the objectivity he needed to exercise it.

The Logic of Science

Holmes did not regard the use of logic in science and detection to be an overtly mathematical enterprise, as it is often presented today. Holmes once stated in “The Blanched Soldier”:

And here it is that I miss my Watson. By cunning questions and ejaculations of wonder he could elevate my simple art, which is but systematized common sense, into a prodigy.

This was a prevalent attitude and was explicitly championed by T. H. Huxley as described in a 1988 *Baker Street Journal* article by J.K. Van Dover (8), who drew parallels between systematized common sense as used in science and in detection.

The popular view is that science proceeds by the unbiased collection of facts followed by the logical deduction of the basic truths of nature. This was universally accepted in Victorian times and by most people today. However, the expected end of science is not truth but knowledge. Martin Gardner, a philosopher of science, stated: “It’s a naïve notion that science eliminates mystery. All science does is push the frontiers of mystery back a little further.” Stephen Jay Gould, a natural historian, writes:

In the conventional model of scientific ‘progress’, we begin in superstitious ignorance and move toward final truth by successive accumulation of facts. Historians of science have utterly discredited this model ... It is a creative human activity, its genius acting more as artists than as information processors. (9)

So, there is a dilemma – should Holmes be judged by the Victorian ideal of how a scientist thinks or by the more realistic modern view?

The dilemma is highlighted by our expectation of the detective in fiction. The detective novel traditionally follows the Victorian ideal and is often depicted as a mirror of the scientific method. The expected end of detective work in fiction is truth. As philosopher Roger Holmes points out: “when we finish the novel we know with finality the solution of the mystery,

while the flesh-and-blood detective can never know whether or not he has found the correct answer.”

In other words, the picture of science as a deductive activity is misleading. Countless papers (and several books on logic) have considered whether Holmes used deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, or something else entirely.

The term “deductive” is used at least 50 times in the Canon, and “inductive” is used once. However, at that time, as today, deduction was associated with common sense reasoning.

“Abduction,” a term coined by the philosopher C. S. Pierce, refers to the creative process of inventing an explanation that covers some observed facts. Pierce offered abduction as a “theory of why it is that people so often guess right.” It is clear that most of Holmes theories were the result of abduction rather than deduction, or even induction. While this may be regarded as a retreat from the Victorian ideal, in fact it’s reassuring that Holmes operated in a way that is consistent with our understanding of how scientists expand our knowledge.

However, deduction is only half of the story; the scientific method is based on the unbiased collection of data. In *A Study in Scarlet*, we hear Holmes say, “It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment.” This sort of statement is made repeatedly and is taken to be a hallmark of Holmes’s method. However, it is paradoxical that productive observation is often predicated on a preliminary theory. As Darwin said, “No one can be a good observer unless he is a good theorizer.” Holmes agrees, stating in “The Adventure of the Reigate Squires:” “It is of the highest importance in the art of detection to be able to recognize, out of a number of facts, which are incidental and which are vital.”

The most famous example occurs in “Silver Blaze,” when he finds a half-burned wax vesta buried in the mud because he “thought it not unlikely.”

Holmes backs further away from this mythic view when in “Silver Blaze” he argues that understanding the assumptions surrounding facts is more important than the raw data itself:

the art of the reasoner should be used rather for the sifting of details than for the acquisition of fresh evidence ... we are suffering from a plethora of surmise, conjecture, and hypothesis. The difficulty is to detach the framework of fact – of absolute, undeniable fact – from the embellishments of theorists and reporters.

A scientist must not avoid assumptions (they are unavoidable) but must be always vigilant, willing to test the assumptions against the “undeniable facts.” The stereotypic scientific Holmes often says, as he did in “The Reigate Squire,” “I make a point of never having any prejudices, and of following docilely wherever fact may lead me.” But more often his actions are different, as he admits in “The Sussex Vampire”: “One forms provisional theories and waits for time or fuller knowledge to explode them. A bad habit ... but human nature is weak. I fear that your old friend here has given an exaggerated view of my scientific methods.”

Conclusion

The point of this paper is not to defend a particular view of Holmes and science. Instead, the thesis is that many contradictory views can be held and all are supported within the Canon. Perhaps this is one reason the stories are so popular. Everyone can find what they are looking for. We find Holmes is a quintessential amateur scientist and also modelled after the rising ranks of professional scientists. He is portrayed as a paragon of logical thinking, while relying on “common sense.” He is a nearly mythic exemplar of the Victorian ideal of the scientific method, while actually conducting his investigations as a modern scientist would.

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Conan Doyle and boxing

By Clifford S. Goldfarb and Hartley R. Nathan

Clifford S. Goldfarb is Chairman of the Friends of Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library and writes frequently on Doylean topics. Hartley R. Nathan is one of the founders of the Bootmakers of Toronto and was Meyers on two occasions. Cliff and Hartley have been writing and presenting Sherlockian papers together for more than 40 years and have written Investigating Sherlock Holmes (Mosaic Press, 2014).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle participated in many different sports, including soccer, golf, tennis, billiards, skiing, and cricket, but beyond all these was his love of boxing. People may not be aware of his almost life-long passion for boxing as a fighter, referee, writer, and advocate.

In 1880 at age 20 he set out as a surgeon on a steam-driven whaling ship, the *SS Hope*, on a six-month voyage to the Arctic. The story is described in virtually every biography, especially his boxing match: “in a makeshift ring where, after one fierce bout, the Steward Jack Lamb was heard enthusing about ‘the best sur-r-r-geon we’ve ever had... he’s blacked my e’e.” (1)

In Conan Doyle’s journal for the voyage, he wrote in his entry for Saturday, April 24, 1880, “No shooting today. Sparrred in the morning.” (2)

Boxing in Sherlock Holmes’s Stories

From *A Study in Scarlet* to “Shoscombe Old Place,” there are 14 Sherlock Holmes adventures where references to boxing can be found.

Watson also described Holmes as an “expert boxer” in “The Five Orange Pips” and *A Study in Scarlet*. Those skills were of service in his encounters with a street rough in “The Final Problem” and Joseph Harrison in “The Naval Treaty.”

In “The Gloria Scott,” Holmes tells Watson that at college he participated in fencing and boxing. In the same story Holmes deduced that Trevor senior had boxed in his youth. In the “The Solitary Cyclist,” Holmes fights Jack Woodley and describes the match to Watson afterwards as “delicious”. It was “A straight left against a slogging ruffian. I emerged as you see me. Mr. Woodley went home in a cart.”

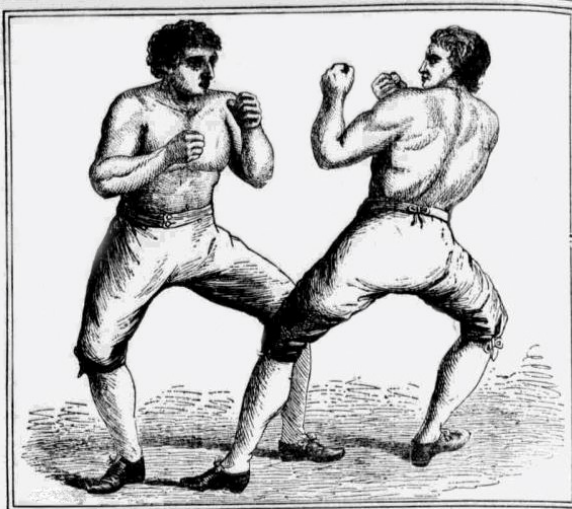
In *The Sign of Four*, the late Major John Sholto employed McMurdo and Williams, who was once lightweight champion of England, as bodyguards.

McMurdo recognized Holmes as “the amateur who fought three rounds with you at Alison’s rooms on the night of your benefit.”

Sam Merton from “The Mazarin Stone” and Steve Dixie from “The Three Gables” were prizefighters. Watson described Cecil Barker as possessing a “prizefighter” face in *The Valley of Fear*, and Von Bork from “His Last Bow” and Sir Robert Norberton from “Shoscombe Old Place” are said to have participated in the sport.

Boxing in Other Conan Doyle Stories/Plays/Movies/Poems

Rodney Stone is a Gothic mystery and boxing novel, first published in 1896 and set in the Regency era. Stone, the narrator, is a Sussex country boy who is taken to London by his uncle Sir Charles Tregellis, a highly respected gentleman who is on familiar terms with the most important people of Great Britain. The novel interweaves Rodney’s coming-of-age story with that of his friend Boy Jim’s boxing endeavours. A large portion of it deals with the famous bare-knuckle boxers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, such as Jem Belcher, John Jackson, Daniel Mendoza, Dutch Sam, and others. The plot turns on the disappearance of Lord Avon, who is accused of murdering his brother. Boy Jim is really Avon’s son,



Daniel Mendoza and George Humphries in their third fight, September 29, 1790. This image was later adopted for the cover of The Croxley Master And Other Tales of Ring and Camp despite being from a different age of boxing.

and it turns out that Avon was hiding to avoid a family gambling scandal. Young Winston Churchill, on duty with his regiment in India, wrote to his brother Jack, who was sending him the monthly instalments of the novel in *The Strand Magazine*, questioning the unlikeliness of this plot.

Rodney Stone describes how popular boxing was in the early 19th century:

All round, the thousands of car-riages and horses were dotted over the moor, and the slopes were gay with tents and booths. A spot had been chosen for the ring, where a great basin had been hollowed out in the ground, so that all round that natural amphitheatre a crowd of thirty thousand people could see very well what was going on in the centre.

In a preface to a later edition of *Rodney Stone*, Conan Doyle wrote that he had added a note at the end “which gives a short account of some of the fighting-men who are mentioned in the course of the narrative...” (3)

The House of Temperley, subtitled *A Melodrama of the Ring*, is a play loosely based on *Rodney Stone*. It follows the misfortunes of Sir Charles Temperley, an inveterate gambler who must risk his fortune and family honour on a bare-knuckle boxing match. Just before the fateful match is to take place, the boxer upon whom Temperley has staked £10,000 is kidnapped. Temperley’s own brother Jack, a soldier, must fight in his stead against the brutal Gloucester Dick. It ran briefly in 1909 and 1910.

The play opened to excellent reviews.... But women were deterred by its violence and the poorly developed romantic theme and would not come to see the play.... When Edward VII became ill and died suddenly on May 6, 1910, attendance at all theatrical productions was curtailed; the run of the play ended a few days later. (4)

“The Lord of Falconbridge: A Legend of the Ring” (5) is set in 1818. Tom Cribb has retired from his boxing career. His protégé Tom Spring is taken to a country estate where he fights the brutish husband of a mystery lady. She turns out to be the estranged wife of Lord Falconbridge, who had badly beaten her lover. Seeking revenge, she hired Spring, who won the fight, but refused to further harm the unconscious Lord.

“The End of Devil Hawker” is a 1930 short story also based on *Rodney Stone*. (6) It is set in part in Tom Cribb’s boxing rooms. (7) This is a Regency-era adventure that includes a brief appearance by Lord Byron. Many of the characters of *Rodney Stone* also reappear in this tale.

“The Croxley Master” shows that Conan Doyle truly believed that boxing was a “manly art.” This 1899 short story is about a young Welsh medical student who enters the boxing ring to fight for a £200 prize that will enable him to establish his own practice. (8)

“*The Bully of Brocas Court: A Legend of the Ring*” (9) is set in 1878 and Conan Doyle describes the sport of boxing in disarray. “The old knuckle-fighting had died out in scandal and disgrace...It was impossible to regulate it, and equally impossible to abolish it.” In the story, a prize

fighter on his way to an army camp for a match is stopped by two men, one of whom challenges the prize fighter to a bare-knuckle match using the long-superseded London Rules. The challenger is about to win when he is scared away by a ghostly white terrier. Later the fighter learns that he has been fighting the ghost of Tom Hickman, who had been beaten by Bill Neal in a bloody fight in 1821 and had killed the terrier in a local inn, after which Hickman died when his carriage overturned at the site of the ghostly encounter. The 1821 fight was real. It was said that £200,000 was bet on the occasion. (10)

The House of Temperley (1913), (11) *Rodney Stone* (1920) (12) and “The Croxley Master” (1921), (13) were all made into silent films.

Conan Doyle had a wonderful sense of humour, seen from time to time in the Holmes tales, but always on display in his delightful Brigadier Gerard stories. In the 1903 tale “The Brigadier in England,” Gerard, a daring light cavalry officer and aide-de-camp to Napoleon, but from a humble background, has been captured in Spain by Wellington and sent to Dartmoor, where he is awaiting repatriation at the home of Lord Rufton. Conan Doyle manages to make fun of the British love of sport, especially boxing, and the impression that it gives to a French provincial. (14)

Gerard is insulted by anti-French remarks made by the Honourable Baldock, an expert boxer, and challenges him to a fight. Accustomed to kicking, Gerard is told that he must fight with his hands, so he uses them to grab, pull Baldock down, bite his ears, bang his head against the ground and generally rough-house him, in Gerard’s mistaken belief that he was actually boxing his oponent. Not surprisingly Baldock concedes.

It would be impossible to convey the humour of this story without quoting extensively from it, and we can only recommend that you find a copy and read it for yourself.

In April, 1909 Conan Doyle’s 17 stanza poem “Bendy’s Sermon” was published in *The Street*. (15) It immortalizes the boxing career of “Bendigo,” or William Thompson, a Nottingham prize fighter who converted to religion and preached at revival meetings throughout England. Thompson was the English heavyweight bare-knuckle champion in 1839. (16)

Jewish Boxers

In the early part of the 20th century, the London boroughs of Whitechapel and Stepney were predominantly Jewish. According to the 1901 census, London had about 50,000 Jews, 43,000 of whom lived in poverty in these two boroughs. There is no wonder this gave rise to many

Jewish boxers, including Daniel Mendoza and Dutch Sam, among others mentioned in *Rodney Stone*. (17)

Daniel Mendoza (1763-1836) was the first boxer to have royal patronage and the first Jew in England to meet the King, at a time when Jews suffered restrictions in public life.

Born in Whitechapel, he proudly billed himself as “Mendoza the Jew” and became such a popular figure that songs were written about him. Newspapers of the day reported one of his bouts in 1789 ahead of news about the storming of the Bastille that started the French Revolution.

Mendoza laid claim to the English boxing title in 1791 when the prevailing champion Benjamin Brain retired.

Mendoza wrote *The Art of Boxing*, the first ever boxing textbook, which stressed diet and training, and taught sidesteps and other ways of avoiding being hit.

Samuel Elias (1775-1816), better known as “Dutch Sam,” born in Whitechapel to Dutch immigrant parents, was a professional boxing pioneer and was active between the years 1801 and 1814. Known as the hardest hitter of his era, he earned the nickname “The Man with the Iron Hand” and “The Terrible Jew.”

Ted “Kid” Lewis (1894-1970) was described as the welterweight champion of the world, 1915-1919. He fought hundreds of times all over the world. Lewis was the first boxer to use the gum shield, which became standard. He loved gambling, diamonds, furs, and fast cars and it was estimated he was living at the rate of £1000 per week. (18) He also hobnobbed with racketeers, royalty, and Winston Churchill and was even



Alfred Nathan, far left, in a group with Ted “Kid” Lewis, centre right, below arrow.

seen in the company of Alfred Nathan, father to one of the co-authors of this paper (see photo below)

Another amateur Jewish boxer was Emanuel “Manny” Shinwell (1884-1986), a British Parliamentarian later elevated to Lord Shinwell, whose name is used for “Shinwell Johnson,” a major Holmes ally, in “The Illustrious Client.” (19)

Illegality of Prize Fighting

By the mid-19th century, the brutality of boxing, cheating, and fixing of matches had led to a serious decline in the sport. The rules of boxing that applied to almost all of Conan Doyle’s stories were the rules established by Jack Broughton in 1743, which would have applied to the fights in *Rodney Stone*. (20) These rules were replaced in 1838 by the London Prize Ring Rules, which were revised in 1853. Finally, in 1867 a Welshman, John Graham Charles, proposed a new set of rules, endorsed by the Marquess of Queensberry, which soon became the standard in the English-speaking world. (21)

In the late 1820s and 1830s, prosecutions were frequent for “prize fighting” but rarely enforced into the early 1900s. (22)

A contest was announced for the world lightweight championship for December 2, 1911 at the Empire Skating Rink in Sparkbrook, Birmingham, England, between Jim Driscoll and Owen Moran. It would be a £4000 purse. The Chief Constable of Birmingham sought to have the fight banned, arguing the knockout blow in the Queensberry Rules seemed to convert what would otherwise be a boxing contest of skill into a prize fight. (23)

The Magistrate’s final decision was that for all the guaranteed precautions about gloves, rules, and referees he could find no reason to define that fight as a major exhibition of skill in boxing rather than a prize fight. He bound Driscoll and Moran over to keep the peace in the sum of £50 each. After the decision, Conan Doyle told a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

You can drive [boxing] underground, but you cannot stop it, instead of having contests in the presence of the public, the Press, and the police, you will have it underground. You can have it in the back parlour of a public-house, but you are going to have it somehow. It is better, surely, to have it in the daylight, where, if there has been any brutality, there will at once be a shriek of “Foul” or “Shame.” It is certain you will not stop it. That is absolutely impossible. I confess I do not understand where the line is going to be drawn between boxing and a veiled prize fight. It was only our

individuality and love of sport which gave us a chance of bringing out our manhood, but if one sport was to be cut down in this way it would do us a great deal of national harm. (24)

Conan Doyle at Home

“In October 1904 he ordered a new 20hp car from the Dennis company in Guildford. After constructing a garage, he put it to good use as a boxing ring where he liked to square up to his more athletic visitors.” (25)

In the August 1923 issue of *The Strand Magazine*, Conan Doyle published “The Forbidden Subject,” about the three children of his second marriage and their introduction to boxing. (26) He describes how they used to beg him to tell them about the old days of bare-knuckle boxing and of the champions, of whom he could recite the entire list, how they won and how they lost.

BOTH the boys were becoming very fair boxers and full of the spirit of the game. Even little Billie, the nine-year-old girl, was touched with it. She could swing a fine loose left, and her right jab to the tummy has been favourably commented upon in influential quarters. But, after all, it is not of much practical use to her sex. It was different with the boys.

We wonder what he would have said about today’s women boxing and fighting in mixed martial arts. He strongly opposed women voting, so it might have taken quite a bit of attitude adjustment on his part. Perhaps not. In *Beyond the City* (1891), (27) Mrs. Westmacott is his advocate for women doing anything that men could, and he mentions that she used to box with her nephew when he was younger.

In 1909 he was invited to referee the James Jeffries – Jack Johnson heavyweight championship fight to take place in Reno, Nevada, on July 4th, 1910. Conan Doyle wrote:

I was much inclined to accepting though my friends pictured me as winding up with a revolver at one ear and a razor at the other. However, the distance and my engagements presented the final bar. (28)

As it turned out, the bout called the “Fight of the Century,” had racial overtones. Johnson was the first African American to challenge the white heavyweight champion. After Johnson defeated Jeffries, who was past his prime and out of shape, riots broke out across America. Conan Doyle had been wise to turn down the opportunity to be the referee.

During the Great War, he also refereed a boxing match among soldiers near his Crowborough home.

While Conan Doyle had a lifelong interest in boxing and boxers, nothing he wrote on or about the sport can compare with the fame Sherlock Holmes brought to him, although that character, as James Woodley found out, had a great straight left.

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London Film Productions, Directed by Harold M. Shaw / Writing Arthur Conan Doyle, starring Charles Maude as Capt. Jack Temperley.
- (12) https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0165447/?ref=fn_al_tt_1 Screen Plays Director: Percy Nash Writers: Arthur Conan Doyle (novel), W. Courtney Rowden Stars: Rex Davis, Lionel d'Aragon, Ethel Newman
- (13) Starred Robert Montgomery not listed in IMDB, and is the second episode of the British TV series *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, shown on January 22, 1967 on the BBC
- (14) *Adventures of Brigadier Gerard*, VI – "The Brigadier in England", *The Strand*, v.XXV, No. 147, March, 1903, p.243, Pictures pp.242, 246.

- (15) Published in *The Strand*, April 1909.
- (16) Thomson, (October 11, 1811-August 23, 1880) defeated James Burks for a purse of £220 and was inducted into the Ring Boxing Hall of Fame in 1955 and the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1991.
- (17) As an aside, Hartley's father was born in Whitechapel in 1901.
- (18) <https://www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk/index/php/9-events/34-1821-bare-knuckle-fight>
- (19) See "We Never Mention Lord Shinwell" in *Canadian Holmes*, Winter 2019/2020.
- (20) The army camp fight in "The Bully of Brocas Court" would have been under the Queensberry Rules (i.e., with gloves). The ghost had never heard of them and specified the bareknuckle London Rules.
- (21) As an aside, The Marquess's son was Lord Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde's lover.
- (22) Adapted from Jack Anderson, "Pugilistic Prosecutions; Prize Fighting and The Courts in Nineteenth Century Britain", *The Sports Historian*, No. 2001, 21 (Nov, 2001), pp.35-53. Published by the British Society of Sports History. See also Encyclopedia.com article prizefighting. See Pugilistic Prosecutions in 19th Century GB <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17460260109447881?journalCode=rsih19>. See also Brian Dobbs: Black and White: The Birth of Modern Boxing, (England 2020).
- (23) On November 12, 1911 Moran, Driscoll and the promoter were brought to court. Their defence was argued by Sir Edward Marshall Hall K.C., the leading defence barrister of the day.
- (24) November 16, 1911. A similar story appeared in *The Daily Mail* on November 16, 1911 under the heading "A defence by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."
- (25) Lycett, p289 [cited in Endnote 1]
- (26) Vol LXVI, No. 392. The chapter was latter added to his book about the children, *The Three of Them*, published by John Murray in 1923
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The bright heart of “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot”

By Karen Campbell, MBt.

Karen Campbell was born in Guelph, Ontario, and moved to Toronto in 1999. Karen has been a member of The Bootmakers of Toronto for 40 years and a Sherlockian since her teens. She teaches high school English and always makes sure Sherlock Holmes is on the course of study.

William P. Schweickert’s poem “A Long Evening with Holmes” evokes the feelings shared by many devotees of the adventures of the Great Detective:

When the world closes in with its worries and cares
And my problems and headaches are coming in pairs
I just climb in my mind those seventeen stairs
And spend a long evening with Holmes.
The good Doctor greets me and motions me in
Holmes grasps my hand and lays down his violin
Then we sit by the fire and sip a tall gin
When I spend a long evening with Holmes. (1)

Sounds awfully cozy, doesn’t it? And yet in some ways this is a remarkably dark set of stories, replete with violence, madness, betrayal, terror, and even hints of diabolical supernatural forces. Of course, the supernatural menaces always turn out to be false, but human evil and the pain it causes are presented as all too real, and in few stories more so than “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot.” Why, then, does this story tend to be such a favourite with enthusiasts? Perhaps because it is one of the most powerful examples of the uplifting theme of the Holmes stories: that it is human goodness, not evil, that will ultimately triumph. Throughout this story, Conan Doyle juxtaposes instances of extreme cruelty and horror with examples of deep love and compassion. In the setting, description, and most of all the characters themselves, Conan Doyle weaves a tale where the bright threads ultimately outshine the dark.

In this adventure it is Watson who restores the light in the darkness of this tale. Stephen Kendrick notes in *The Gospel According to Sherlock Holmes* that Holmes’s power to see into the wickedness of the human heart

is godlike. (2) In this story, it is Watson's act that is superhuman. He alone of the six people subjected to this drug can overcome it, and this is a man who survived the horrific battle of Maiwand. It is his love for Holmes that allows him to rise above the horrors of the drug and get the two of them to safety. After the pair were outside in the fresh air "slowly it [the drug-induced fear] rose from our souls like the mists from a landscape," (3) Watson's love for Holmes gives him the strength to drive away the darkness of fear and death. And it does not end there: the exchange that follows is one of the most moving displays of their mutual affection until "The Adventure of the Three Garridebs":

"Upon my word, Watson," said Holmes at last in an unsteady voice, "I owe you both my thanks and an apology. It was an unjustifiable experiment even for oneself, and doubly so for a friend. I really am very sorry."

"You know," I answered, with some emotion, for I had never seen so much of Holmes's heart before, "that it is my greatest joy and privilege to help you." (4)

This surely is what Schweickert's poem is talking about when he celebrates the cozy warmth engendered by the Holmes stories: it is this great friendship that makes readers come to them for comfort, and it doesn't get much cozier than this.

In her essay "The Monster Within: Pseudo-Gothic Tales of the Canon," Barbara Rusch speaks of "the inner landscape" with regard to the Grimpen Mire in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. She explains how the physical landscape of the mire is a metaphor for the evil within the Baskerville family. She writes, "It is a barbarous terrain, devoid of humanity and the laws of civilized man, itself a kind of throwback, 'a bad place...'" (5)

The setting in "The Devil's Foot," is also used as psychological metaphor. Like Dartmoor in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, this setting is lonely and remote, this time at the extreme end of the Cornish Peninsula: in a way, at the very edge of civilization itself. Mounts Bay, upon which Holmes and Watson's cottage looks, appears beautiful and safe, but "Then comes the sudden swirl round of the wind, the blustering gale from the south-west, the dragging anchor, the lee shore, and the last battle in the creaming breakers. The wise mariner stands far out from that evil place." (6) The bay is like the dark realms of the unconscious, where the ship of our sanity may be dashed by the storms and rocks of fear. As Watson says, we are well advised to be respectful of such destructive power.



Sherlock Holmes by G. Dutriac, from “*Le Pied du Diable*” in *Lectures Pour Tous*, October-November 1921.

The rolling moors of Cornwall are very lonely, marked by prehistoric ruins whose burial mounds suggest that this civilization destroyed itself through war. However, the moors are also marked by church towers, and the hamlet of Tredannick Wollas, “where the cottages of a couple of hundred inhabitants clustered round and ancient, moss-grown church.” (7) Although such structures are certainly plentiful in rural England, the repeated emphasis of the churches suggests a deeper significance. In a story containing numerous references to the Devil, there is equal emphasis on the House of God, that stands as a refuge and a bastion.

Conan Doyle contrasts light and dark throughout the story. Even the Tregennis house of Tredannick Wartha, tragically empty as it is when Holmes and Watson visit, is described as a large and bright dwelling with a garden filled with flowers. Like dogs, houses in the Holmes stories often reflect their owners, and this one appears to have been the home of a happy, loving family. Sadly, when the family is last seen, Mortimer Tregennis states that “Something has come into that room which has dashed the light of reason from their minds.” (8) Light and darkness as symbols of good and evil appear repeatedly in these stories, (as noted by Rusch, (5) Kendrick (2) and others) and certainly are put to powerful use in “The Devil’s Foot.” The stricken family “had been sitting there in the dark until dawn had broken,” (9) a darkness of the mind that seems only to be vanquished by death.

The psychological darkness induced by the drug at the centre of this adventure is described as a cloud, and interestingly, Holmes is described earlier in the story as being surrounded by a dark blue cloud of tobacco smoke as he sits with his black brows drawn. While it is true that Holmes is often portrayed as a heavy smoker in the stories, even to a comic extreme, here his grim countenance follows Watson’s explanation of how the doctor has had to take his friend away on holiday, because Holmes is on the edge of a nervous breakdown. But when Holmes is in danger of being consumed by his own cloud, he knows enough to reach out to Watson for help: “The sea air, sunshine, and patience, Watson,” (10) he prescribes as a remedy.

Other characters in the story echo the theme of love’s triumph. The kindly Reverend Roundhay, who seems a naïve country cleric on the surface, has known for years about the technically adulterous relationship between Dr. Leon Sterndale and Brenda Tregennis. Yet although the couple are breaking the letter of the law, Roundhay understands that the spirit of the law is more important. He understands the difficulty of their position and supports them in their love. It is he who breaks the news to Sterndale, and no doubt tries to comfort him as well. The insight, wisdom and compassion revealed by this seemingly one-dimensional comic character shows that the parish of Tredannick Wollas is not devil-ridden at all: there is much hidden goodness here.

Another aspect of the light and dark of this story is the view of good vs. evil. Brenda Tregennis’s goodness is celebrated by those who knew her best. Sterndale calls her an angel, and she seems to have been the only person capable of humanizing him. She waits patiently for him for years, a testament to the strength of her love. (I believe she was inspired by the beautiful Jean Leckie, who waited for years to be united with Conan

Doyle.) And despite the twisted, monstrous evil of Brenda's brother Mortimer, who with his sin of Cain must be one of the most diabolical villains in the Canon, her goodness is not vanquished by him. She continues to inspire Sterndale to return to Africa and complete his good work, whatever that may be (keeping lions from eating native villagers, presumably). She was able to tame this fierce lion of a man into a force for good.

Sterndale makes an interesting foil for another well-remembered evil character in the Canon, Dr. Grimsby Roylott, with their shared association with savage animals and savage people. They are also cunning, isolated, and determined. In the three characteristics, Sterndale shows that he is a worthy opponent for Holmes. Sterndale and Holmes are apex predators, men who live beyond the law, and who act as their own judge and jury. Sterndale (and even his name suggests his ruthlessness) metes out a terrible revenge on Mortimer Tregennis, frightening himself by its intensity: "My God! How he died! But my heart was flint..." (11) He is similar to Holmes in that he has allowed only one person into his heart, and woe betide whoever takes that person from him. Holmes muses that if he had ever loved and lost as Sterndale had, he might be moved to such revenge, and indeed, in "The Adventure of the Three Garridebs," tells Killer Evans, "By the Lord, it is as well for you. If you had killed Watson, you would not have got out of this room alive." (12) And Watson tells us, "His [Holmes's] face set like flint as he glared at our prisoner..." (13) – the exact same adjective Sterndale uses to describe his terrible resolve.

However, when Holmes takes the law into his hands in these stories, he seasons justice with mercy. Holmes even fears that sometimes he has done more harm by exposing a miscreant than he would have by allowing that person to escape. In this case, Holmes brings great compassion to bear when dealing with Sterndale. He empathizes with the man's grief, recognizing that Sterndale has the potential, and the intention, to do good works from now on. Sterndale exclaims, "I believe that you are the Devil himself," (14) but as Kendrick observes, Holmes is on quite the other side. Kendrick notes that in Holmes's benediction to Sterndale, "Go and do the other half. I, at least, am not prepared to prevent you [from completing your good work]," (15) Holmes is echoing the words of Christ to the adulteress, whom he has saved from death by stoning: "Then neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." (16) Brenda saves Sterndale, Watson saves Holmes, and Holmes saves Sterndale once again. The good that all of them have done lives on.

"The Devil's Foot" might well have been subtitled "and of the Human Heart," for this story probes both the darkest corners and brightest halls of

that eternally complex dwelling. Conan Doyle allows us to vicariously face our greatest demons, and to witness the triumph of human goodness over evil. The Holmes stories assure us of what the old medieval song says, “And love will still be lord of all.”

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Holmes and Chaplin

By Ray Rawlings

Ray has been a student of Chaplin's work since he saw The Great Dictator, Chaplin's brilliant satire of the Nazis, in 1959. Ray has given presentations on Chaplin and many other showbiz personalities at 14 historic and cultural clubs. None of this would have been possible without the help of his gifted wife Marmey. Ray was a member of the Bootmakers for 25 years and is presently active in the Gilbert & Sullivan and Richard the Third societies.

Charlie Chaplin gave the world cinematic masterpieces, which included hilarious comedy, biting social satire and brilliant acting. He received both the adulation of the audience and the plaudits of the press, a considerable accomplishment. Yet, Chaplin may, in some small measure, have owed some of this success to Sherlock Holmes.

Chaplin's early years were spent in abject poverty in the slums of South London. In 1898, at the age of nine, Chaplin began his career in show business by joining a clog-dancing troupe, The Eight Lancashire Lads. After three years touring the provincial music halls with the Lads, Chaplin had a succession of odd jobs, one of which was being a newsboy outside a subway station. This was good training because he was offered the part of a newsboy in H.A. Saintsbury's comedy *Jim, the Romance of a Cockney*.

The critics panned *Jim*, but praised Chaplin. His only problem was an inability to pronounce Pierpoint. When he had to say: "Who do you think you are, Mr. Pierpoint Morgan?" it always came out "Putterpint." The audience liked it, so Saintsbury told him to keep saying it. Chaplin learned a lot working under Saintsbury. To quote from his 1964 *My Autobiography*: "I had no idea there was such a thing as stagecraft, timing, pausing, a cue to turn, to sit, but it came naturally to me."

Jim closed after two weeks and the company started rehearsals for William Gillette's play *Sherlock Holmes*, in which Saintsbury would play Holmes, and Chaplin, Billy the pageboy. Chaplin said in his autobiography "Saintsbury was a living replica of the illustrations in the Strand Magazine. He had a long, sensitive face and an inspired forehead. Of all those who played Holmes, he was considered the best, even better than William Gillette, the original Holmes and author of the play."

After 40 weeks in the provinces, they played eight weeks in the suburbs of London, the play being, in Chaplin's words, "A phenomenal success." While on a second tour of the provinces in *Sherlock Holmes*, William Gillette came to London with the beautiful American actress, Marie Doro, to produce a play he had written titled *Clarissa*. The critics were unkind to the play and the manner of Gillette's speech, which led him to write a 10-minute curtain-raiser, for *Clarissa*, which he called *The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes*, where he never said a word; his joke was on the critics.

There were only five in the cast, Holmes, Billy the Pageboy, a mad woman, and two men from the lunatic asylum who came to take her away. Chaplin was thrilled to be asked to play Billy and even more thrilled to meet Gillette, in fact, so thrilled, he forgot to ask what he would be paid. The mad woman raved for 20 minutes until they came to take her to the asylum. As she is leaving, Billy says to Holmes, "You were right sir, it is the right asylum."

After *Clarissa* folded, Gillette completed the season with a revival of *Sherlock Holmes*, with himself as Holmes and Chaplin as Billy, at the Duke of York Theatre. This was, in Chaplin's words, "an immediate success." *Sherlock Holmes* ended its run in December 1905, with Gillette's sudden departure for America. This was a disappointment for Chaplin, who said he wanted to learn more from Gillette about the legitimate theatre. Is there an illegitimate theatre?

For two years, Chaplin tried his hand at a variety (no pun intended) of acts: in a slapstick group, Casey's Circus, as a stand-up comic, and as a comedy writer, but had little success. The turning point came in 1907, when his older brother, Sydney, then a member of Britain's leading comedy troupe, Fred Karno's Circus, persuading Karno to give Chaplin a trial. Chaplin soon learned the speed and timing necessary to be a cog in Karno's well-oiled, knockabout, whirligig machine and was on his way.

In 1910, after several tours of the provinces, Karno's troupe set sail for a tour of the American vaudeville circuit. More tours followed; on one of them, he was noticed by Mack Sennett, (from Danville, Quebec) the founder of the Keystone Movie Studio, in Edendale, California, who offered Chaplin a contract to star in his films. Sennett would later say, "Chaplin is the greatest motion picture artist, the world has ever seen."

Chaplin joined Keystone in December 1913, and for a year performed many of the zany routines he had learned with the Karno troupe and, in the process, invented his "Tramp" character. Leaving Keystone in December 1914, Chaplin added more dimensions to his character. The defining moment when the Tramp became the character the world knew and loved

so much was when Chaplin made *The Tramp*, in April 1915. This was one of the most innovative moments in the history of cinema. Here was a little man buffeted but never beaten by the trials and tribulations of life and struggling along, never giving up, always believing that tomorrow will be a better day. There, then, was a character that all struggling humanity could take to its heart. In short, The Tramp was a symbol of the universal everyman.

Twenty-five years of excellent movies followed, some with a moral theme, some with a social theme, but all expressed through hilarious comedy which was part of the miracle of Chaplin's genius.

If one ever doubted the brilliance of Chaplin's dramatic skills, one need only watch the final moments of *City Lights*, 1931, in which he expresses a wide range of feelings with the minimal amount of movement in his facial muscles and the expression in his eyes. If it is recognized as genius, it's because it goes beyond genius. It would be well to realize that the only dramatic training Chaplin ever had, before film, were in plays with Saintsbury and Gillette.

Chaplin's finest hour was, unquestionably, *The Great Dictator*, 1940, his tour de force of the Nazis in general and Hitler in particular. It wasn't his best movie artistically, but certainly his bravest. When he began shooting in 1939, the British government told him they would not show his film in Britain and the Association of American Cinema Owners, said they would not show it in America. Chaplin stopped work on the film, but the situation was saved when President Roosevelt sent his man, Harry Hopkins, to Chaplin with a message, "Go ahead and make your film, I will see to it they will show it in both countries."

This was not Hollywood's first anti-Nazi movie. In 1938, Warner Brothers had made *The Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, which was in retaliation for the murder of their representative in Berlin, who was Jewish. Nevertheless, the words Jew and Jewish were never spoken in their film, whereas Chaplin did say them and showed Jews fighting back against their tormentors. Chaplin, though not Jewish, had great admiration for Jewish social consciousness, which was similar to his own. He was disgusted with what the Nazis and their fellow thugs in Spain and Italy, had been allowed to get away with and therefore, thought this was a film he had to make.

To say: "Had there been no Holmes, there would have been no Chaplin," would be a masterpiece of overstatement. But, nevertheless, we can't rule out that the training Chaplin received in *Sherlock Homes*, and the *Painful Predicament*, may have helped him considerably as a dramatic actor.

Strictly Personal

Where a Canadian Sherlockian goes under the microscope.

Name: Ian Bennett

Age: 65

Birthplace: at home, above the Pharmacy in Pharmacy House, Marden, Kent, United Kingdom

Occupation: Retired elementary school principal.

Current city of residence: London, Ontario

Major accomplishments in life: I got to be married to the girl I wanted, and stayed that way for 43 years so far. I got to have five wonderful children and nine amazing grandchildren. I made it to the principalship and ended my career at a school for the arts. Fantastic. I have no complaints about my life.

Goal in life: To be the best version of me I could possibly be.

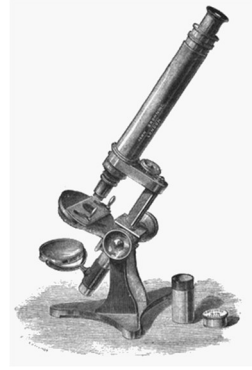
In school I excelled at: English, history and maybe drama – had lots of fun in drama class, anyway. I forgot it was supposed to be work.

A great evening for me is: A good mystery movie on TV, attending some Shakespeare in Stratford or maybe a concert.

Favourite dining experience: I used to lean on Michael's on The Thames but since Covid I haven't been out and about much. Now we are nearly back to normal, I'll have to get out there again and find a new spot. The Cesspudlians gather at The Church Key Pub...and other venues.

Other hobbies and interests: I'm polishing my skills on video editing and trying new things all the time with this hobby. Conquered green screen so now I can appear to be somewhere else. Next step is to gump myself into a movie! I made a movie with my grandsons and added a little "Benny Hill" music and sped it up. They laughed themselves silly. Great fun.

I'm currently working on: I'm working hard to make Cesspudlian meetings as informative, interesting and interactive as possible. I've got a virtual TV studio and I run the Zoom meeting through that software so I



can throw up graphics or add sound effects, change scenes and screen share without screen sharing. Sometimes I create my own problems but eventually, I work them out and it's a great pleasure to reveal them at the meeting. We're hoping to add a Sherlockian Jeopardy game to our monthly Zoom and it's been great fun creating the categories and answers/questions.



Three favourite canonical tales:

“The Three Garridebs.” Holmes’s anger at Watson’s wound reveals the depth of his concern for his friend. “The Devil’s Foot” – Watson saves Holmes from a horrible fate. *Hound* – the perfect mystery story. Watson shows his quality as a brave and loyal sidekick!

Three least favourite Canonical tales: “The Yellow Face,” “The Mazarin Stone” and “The Veiled Lodger.” Of these I dislike “Mazarin Stone” the most.

Favourite non-Sherlockian reading: I constantly circle back to Tolkien, but right now I’m enjoying the *Murderbot Diaries* by Martha Wilson. Great mystery along with high-tech futures. A crime for the future. I’ve also liked Asimov’s pipe-smoking Elijah Baley. A nice Holmesian sensibility for crime in the world to come.

Favourite Sherlockian movie: *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959) with Peter Cushing as Holmes. Cushing is my favourite Holmes and I feel he captures the great detective with great accuracy. I enjoy Jeremy Brett’s version very much, but Cushing was the first one I ever saw, and I’ve been hooked ever since. I watched all the Rathbones too, but I don’t think the directors ever really let him loose to show what he could do. They were quickly made and put out so something is lost in the translation. Cushing has the same problem in the Hammer version but somehow, he rises above it.

Favourite non-Sherlockian movies: *Patton*. George C. Scott is mesmerizing. I like him in *They Might Be Giants* too!

Most prized possessions in my Sherlockian collection: My Baring-Gould annotated collection. I refer to it frequently and it's always first in my places to look for things. I also have his biography of Holmes and re-read it often.

If I could live anytime in history, it would be: I would say now, because the possibilities are endless, but if I had to go back, I think the 60s would be pretty great to go through again with a different point of view and some insight into where to look. I'd like to hang out at 4 a.m. in the morning in the Blue Boar Inn in the Watford Gap and watch the Beatles, Stones, Kinks and everybody else gather for a communal feast on their way back from their gigs up north. Before they were famous; they were just guys who need to eat and sit with fellow musicians and talk about how the show went. I think I could get some great pictures.

If I could ask Holmes, Watson and Doyle each one question, it would be:

Holmes: Why, oh why, did you let John Openshaw go back home in "The Five Orange Pips" to his certain death?

Watson: Where the heck were you wounded? And I don't mean "In Afghanistan."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: Why on earth did you decide to marry Watson? Just leave him as a bachelor.

First learned of The Bookmakers: I became aware of the Bookmakers when I started to teach Sherlock Holmes in my grade 8 classroom in the late 80s. In reading some material I found a reference to the Bookmakers and a magazine called *Canadian Holmes*. I wrote for a sample, and someone kindly sent me a package of 5 or 6 copies of various editions. I fell down the rabbit hole!

I would like my epitaph to read: I was an educator, so the only epitaph that matters is the one we all want to have: "He made a difference."

My last words will be: "Always remember, just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean someone isn't really out to get you."

What question do I wish I would have been asked: "How can we donate to you?"

“a few lines upon a sheet of paper” – Conan Doyle’s other work for The Strand Magazine

By Mark Jones

Mark Jones is a Sherlockian and Doylean based in York, in the United Kingdom. He writes widely on all matters ACD and is co-host of Doings of Doyle – The Arthur Conan Doyle Podcast.

When Felix Stanniford is knocked from his bicycle by a four-wheeler, solicitor Frank Alder helps the nervy young man into his home. Stanniford’s house is a great, dark, gloomy pile, formerly a country retreat, the burden of which he has felt since the flight of his father and the death of his mother. But the outside is nothing compared to the abandoned and decaying interior, filled with empty rooms, one of which has been sealed on his father’s orders with a lump of red wax...



As with many of the *Round the Fire Stories*, ‘The Story of the Sealed Room’ finds Conan Doyle delighting in his gothic roots. Stanniford’s house is preserved in the past, on land which has been “gradually overtaken and surrounded by the red brick tentacles of the London octopus.” The young man is agitated beyond reason, consumed by his father’s instruction that he must not open the sealed room until he

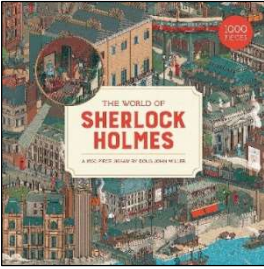
is 21 years old. Having received few messages from his father in Paris since his mother's death, Felix is now convinced his father has died.

Of course, the mystery is transparent, and the solution telegraphed clumsily early, but arguably this is a story more in the telling than the puzzle. What is more interesting than the presence of the father's corpse in the sealed room is why this should be the case. If we conform to the gothic tradition of Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* or *The Black Cat*, the corpse would be proximate to the murderer, but here that's not the solution. Instead, the father, a successful banker, took his life over a financial scandal, but wanted to maintain the impression of being alive so as not to usher his wife to an early grave on account of her already weakened heart. Given Touie's contemporaneous illness, one wonders how Conan Doyle could have been so oblivious or insensitive to build this in, but, as we have seen in 'The Beetle Hunter,' family traumas make for good drama.

This shadow aside, there is much to enjoy in this short vignette. Conan Doyle's penchant for coded names is there in Frank Alder – literally a sturdy British tree – who plays the same function of reliable witness as Philip Hardacre in 'The Beetle Hunter' (although today Alder's habits of conducting "long nocturnal excursions" around Hampstead and Highgate is liable to see him arrested). The writing is delightful, such as the line about urban sprawl and Conan Doyle's observation that the bicycle accident, taking place on a wide and empty road, had "that malignant accuracy which brings two ocean liners together in the broad waste of the Atlantic" (as an enthusiastic motorist, Conan Doyle declares the accident the cyclist's fault). And the sense of Alder's realisation and dread is nicely conveyed to an ending we expect but still fear. Had there been more mystery or more reason to doubt Stanniford, the story would be richer, but as a tale concerned with "the grotesque and with the terrible" it nicely inverts the notion that there must be a villain, giving us a tragedy rather than a crime.

As an aside, this is the only Conan Doyle story illustrated by Claude Allin Shepperson (1867-1921), one of the most versatile painters and commercial artists of his day. Shepperson's six illustrations are an eclectic mix of watercolour, line drawing, and cartoon, and are all beautifully done. A year later, he would be praised for his work on a reissue of *Lavengro* by George Borrow, an author Conan Doyle would later lampoon in 'Borrowed Scenes' (1913).

“Holmes gave me a brief review”



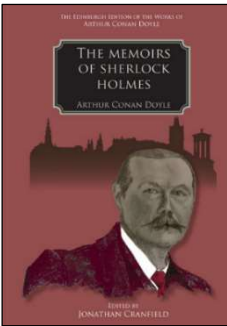
The World of Sherlock Holmes by Doug John Miller (2020, Laurence Publishing Co. 19.99 USD, jigsaw puzzle, 27 inches by 19 inches, 1000 pieces)

This puzzle is a bird’s-eye view of what the blurb calls “Holmes’ London,” so in addition to some of the usual buildings, we get the Diogenes Club, and the Alpha Inn (from “The Blue Carbuncle”), and the streets are full of people:

there is an accompanying key that identifies some 30 of these people as Canonical characters (and a few more as non-characters, such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Sidney Paget), but who are all the others? You’re on your own! So far, I’ve only figured out one. I think.

The whole thing is very busy: on some of the buildings, for example, you can see every individual computer-generated brick. But this busyness also makes the puzzle more difficult, by breaking up otherwise uniform areas. (And you can make a jigsaw puzzle even harder by not looking at the picture once you’ve started working on it.) So, allow yourself enough time, and lay in a good supply of shag.

– Don Roebuck



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes, edited by Jonathan Cranfield (2023, Edinburgh University Press), £125 GBP.

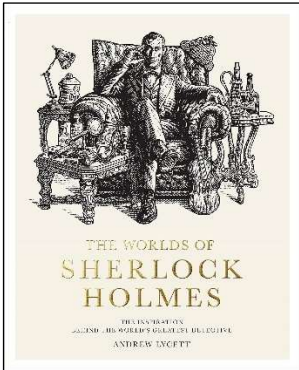
This is the second release in the Edinburgh University Press Conan Doyle series, whose general editor, Douglas Kerr, spoke at the 2022 Jubilee @221B conference in Toronto.

This book has a similar format as the previous one, with a preface, a chronology of ACD, and a detailed introduction. This 16-page introduction gives the reader a firm understanding of where Conan Doyle was in his literary career as well as his own personal life when he wrote these 11 stories. These stories are followed up by two appendices, “The Cardboard Box,” and an extract from Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.” A brief note at the beginning of the Poe extract explains why it is there. A 19-page Essay on the Text follows Appendix 2 and is an interesting read for anyone curious about how a manuscript goes from the author’s pen to the reader’s hand, the history of some manuscripts and ACD’s working relationship with his editors.

– Mark Alberstat

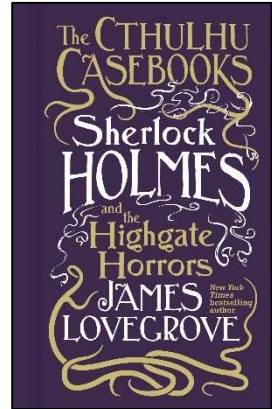
Forthcoming books of Sherlockian/Doylean interest

Compiled by Charles Prepolec, BSI, MBt. Release dates may change, but were accurate at the time of writing.

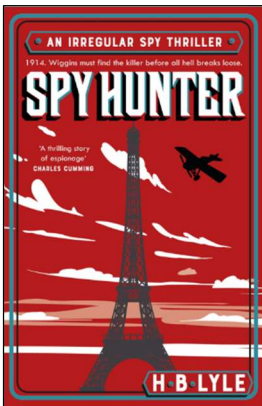


October 2023: *The Worlds of Sherlock Holmes: The Inspiration Behind the World's Greatest Detective* by Andrew Lycett (Frances Lincoln \$32 USD). Biographer Andrew Lycett explores all that encompasses the world of the great detective – tracing the infamous character's own interests, personality, and mythologized biography alongside that of his creator's.

October 2023: *Cthulhu Casebooks - Sherlock Holmes and the Highgate Horrors* by James Lovegrove (Titan Books \$22.95 USD). A new standalone fourth volume follow-up to his excellent Cthulhu Casebooks trilogy setting Holmes and Watson against the monstrous mythos creatures of H.P. Lovecraft.

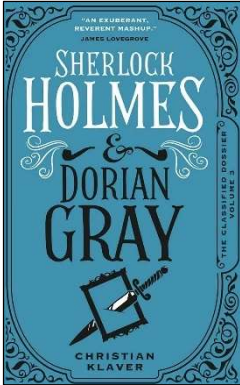
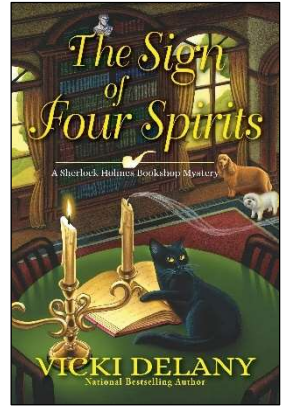


January 2024: *Spy Hunter: An Irregular Spy Thriller* by H.B. Lyle (Mobius \$28.00 USD). Fourth book in a great series featuring an adult Wiggins as an agent of the recently formed Secret Service Bureau. In this volume, set in 1914, Wiggins is on the track of a German spy who may have killed Sherlock Holmes!



January 2024: *The Sign of Four Spirits: A Sherlock Holmes Bookshop Mystery* by Vicki Delany (Crooked Lane Books \$29.99 USD). Ninth book in the always fun Gemma Doyle

Sherlock Holmes Bookshop and Emporium series. This time Gemma and crew find themselves investigating a locked room murder during a séance at a psychic fair and must determine if the killer is of flesh and blood or if the medium summoned doom from beyond the veil.



March 2024: *The Classified Dossier - Sherlock Holmes and Dorian Gray* by Christian Klaver (Titan Books \$22.95 USD). Klaver’s third book in his ‘Classified Dossier’ series placing Holmes alongside or against classic literary monsters. The previous ‘Dossiers’ included Dracula and Mr. Hyde. This time out Oscar Wilde’s Dorian Gray is the focus.

OOTMAKERS’ DIARY

... it is a page from some private diary.
— *The Five Orange Pips*

Saturday June 3, 2023

At 2 p.m. 14 current and former Bootmakers gathered at the Duke of Cornwall Pub on University Ave. for a pleasant afternoon of good food, good company and the chance to finally get together in person after 3 years of online meetings.

– David Sanders M.Bt

Saturday September 9, 2023

At 1:05 p.m. Meyers, Mike Ranieri, welcomed 47 Sherlockians via Zoom to look into “The Illustrious Client.” Meyers announced that some Bootmakers are not getting the notices as their computer sends them to Junk file. Mike suggested checking the calendar on the website for the meeting schedule. Also, making sure your name appears when you Zoom in so he knows who you are, and that meetings will be on Zoom except for the December one, which will be at the Pilot Tavern both live and Zoom.

Mike was to then play a Bootmaker theme music written by Joshua Harvey, followed by an interview, but due to technical problems, or Moriarty, Mike had to go on to the next item.

Thelma Beam introduced Mimi Okabe – who spoke on the influence Sherlock Holmes has had on Japanese Manga books and comics, especially boy detectives. Some are paragons of virtue, while others, despite crime fighting, also suffer from human weaknesses. Mimi also mentioned her new book on the subject titled, *Manga, Murder and Mystery: The Boy Detectives of Japan’s Lost Generation*.

Thelma asked Mimi to pick a number between 1 and 250, she chose 48. Thelma would check the membership list and the 48th person would win a copy. The name was announced after the quiz.

Former Lassus, Jim Ballinger, told us about several of the music hall songs based on Sherlock Holmes written in the 1890s and early 20th century.

An excellent quiz from Karen Campbell followed. The winners were Bruce Aiken with 20 out of 20, and runner up Sabina Hollis with 19. They will receive prizes donated by George Vanderburgh. Thelma announced Donny Zaldin as the lucky winner of Mimi’s book. It is also available on Amazon for those who wish to purchase it.

Current Lassus, Karen Gold, sang *Blame it on the Cassanova*, based on the Eydie Gormé song *Blame it on the Bossa nova*.

David Sanders did the wrap-up, pointing out some interesting points to the story and finishing up with his version of *Can’t Help Lovin That Man of Mine*, which he had sung at a meeting in 2013 when it was the story of the evening.

Mike sorted out the problem and was able to play Joshua Harvey’s music but postponed the interview for another meeting.

At 3 p.m. Mike brought the meeting to a close with a reminder the next would be “The Sussex Vampire,” on October 28.

– David Sanders M.Bt.



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