



ARTHUR

CONAN

DOYLE

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ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

an exhibit from

the Mary Kahler and
Philip S. Hench
Collection

July 18-September 30, 1979

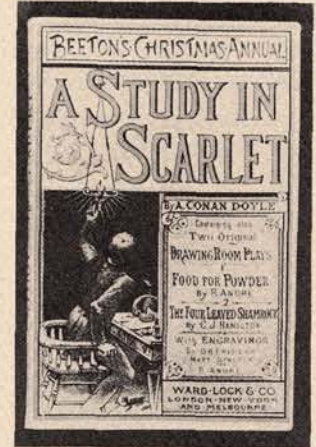
William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes
from the original drawing by
Frederic Dorr Steele

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is best remembered as the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories. However, the Holmes tales, though the primary source of his fame and wealth, were of little moment to their creator. Indeed, Doyle often regretted having invented Sherlock Holmes, "the world's first consulting detective."

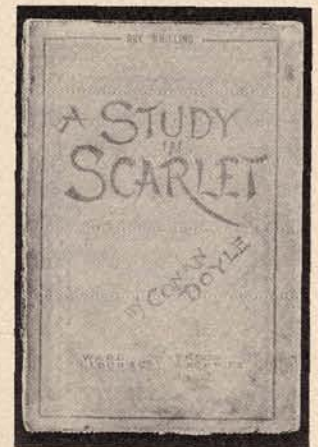
Doyle was born in Edinburgh on May 22, 1859, the eldest son of Charles Doyle, a civil servant and artist, and Mary Foley Doyle. Charles Doyle was chronically ill and was seldom able to provide much moral or financial support for his large family. But Mary Doyle was a strong-willed woman and most influenced Arthur's life. In 1876 she decided upon a medical career for her son, and Arthur entered Edinburgh University, noted for its medical school. For the next five years Arthur dutifully studied medicine, spending his vacations working to finance his education and to help support the family of seven other brothers and sisters.

Doyle received a bachelor of medicine in August 1881. After a brief and unsuccessful partnership with a fellow student, Doyle became a general practitioner in Southsea, a suburb of Portsmouth, where he slowly built a fair-sized practice. However, he could not benefit from it, as he still gave financial assistance to his family. He also continued his education in his spare time and took his M.D. in 1885. In March 1886 Doyle married Louise Hawkins, the sister of one of his patients. Thus, in addition to his parents and brothers and sisters, he now had a wife to support.

Doyle began to wonder whether medicine was the best occupation for him. He had written two novels and had had several short stories published. Indeed, his first published story, "The Mystery of Sassassa Valley," had appeared in the prestigious *Chamber's Journal* in 1879. Might he not find a more rewarding career in the world of letters? He continued to write in his spare time (which was ample considering the few patients he had). In 1886 he turned his attention to detective stories and thus laid the



First appearance of Sherlock Holmes, 1887



First edition, 1888



First appearance of second Holmes story, 1890



First edition, 1890

groundwork for his future fame. Doyle had read the earlier detective writers and noted that, save for such notable exceptions as Poe and Émile Gaboriau, the results in their stories were achieved through luck and chance. He was determined to write stories in which the detective came to his conclusions through the application of observation and logic.

Doyle's debt to Poe's detective, Dupin, was considerable, but Sherlock Holmes was primarily based upon Dr. Joseph Bell, who lectured at Edinburgh University. Bell instilled in his students an appreciation for the importance of careful observation in making medical diagnoses and was famous for the deductions he made about his patients. But as Bell himself pointed out, Doyle also put his own personality into the character of Sherlock Holmes. Doyle himself possessed considerable deductive ability, and Holmes's sense of fair play, his standing up for the underdog, and his flair for the dramatic were all attributes of his creator.

Doyle started his first Sherlock Holmes story in March 1886 and finished it the next month. After this short novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, was rejected by three publishers, Doyle sent it to the London firm of Ward, Lock & Co. The chief editor gave it to his wife for evaluation. When she reacted enthusiastically to the story, calling Doyle a "born novelist," it was accepted for publication. He was paid £25 for it, the only money he was ever to receive from its publication. Ward, Lock & Co. printed *A Study in Scarlet* in the 1887 issue of their *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, where it shared space with two now forgotten drawing room plays. The first separate edition was published by the same firm the next year.

A Study in Scarlet sold modestly, and it was an American who kept Holmes and Watson from passing into oblivion. John Marshall Stoddart, editor of the Philadelphia based *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, which was published in a London edition by Ward, Lock & Co., was sufficiently impressed by *A Study in Scarlet* to ask Doyle to write another adventure of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

This new work, *The Sign of Four*, appeared in *Lippincott's* in February 1890, and in book form by Spencer Blackett later that year. In this tale Holmes brings to justice the murderer Jonathan Small and solves the mystery surrounding the great Agra treasure of India. One of Holmes's most eccentric traits is brought to light in this story: he takes cocaine to alleviate his boredom between cases. And Watson, for-

ever a romantic, finds a wife in Miss Mary Morstan, Holmes's client.

In the meantime Doyle was enjoying a respectable success for his other writings, such as his historical novels, *Micah Clarke* and *The White Company*, but he was still not earning sufficient money to support his wife and child, as well as his family back in Edinburgh. Thus, in December 1890, Doyle sold his practice in Southsea and took his family to Vienna, where he studied to become an eye doctor. He returned to England in March 1891 and set up his new practice in London. This proved to be a failing venture, and, once again, Doyle had ample time to devote to writing.

Doyle conceived of the idea, then almost new in England, of writing a series of short stories featuring the same central characters, each story complete in itself. He had noticed that readers often lost interest in serials, if they missed an installment or two. Holmes and Watson were chosen as these characters, and Doyle rapidly wrote half a dozen stories. These appeared in *The Strand Magazine*, a new monthly periodical published by George Newnes, Ltd., which was a great success owing to its numerous illustrations and its inclusion of fiction and nonfiction of wide contemporary appeal. Doyle's association with this magazine lasted for the rest of his life. Through publication in *The Strand* Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson became household words. There were twelve short stories in the initial series, run in *The Strand* in 1891 and 1892 and published by Newnes as a collection, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, in the latter year. An additional series of adventures was published in *The Strand* in 1893 and 1894, and published as *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* by Newnes in 1894.

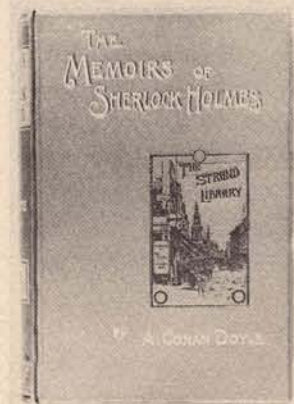
In the last of these stories, "The Final Problem," Doyle decided to rid himself of Holmes, regardless of how much money the stories were bringing him. He had by now given up his medical career for writing, and wanted to establish a reputation as a serious author. He had Holmes fight a climactic battle with his arch-enemy, Professor Moriarty, at the brink of the Reichenbach Falls near Meiringen, Switzerland, which ended (or so it seemed) with both plummeting to their deaths. Watson, who had been led away from the scene by a false message, returned to find a poignant farewell note from Holmes and thus, "with a heavy heart" recorded the passing of "the best and the wisest man whom I have ever known."



Typical issue, with a Holmes tale



First edition, 1892



First edition, 1894

The shocking death of Holmes caused a public uproar reminiscent of that which occurred when Dickens had killed Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Doyle and Newnes were swamped with outraged and pleading letters, and it is said that more than one young man went about with a black arm band mourning the great detective's death.

Doyle wrote more historical novels and a series of stories involving the exploits of a soldier of fortune, Brigadier Gerard, which rivaled the Holmes tales in popularity. But in 1899 Doyle collaborated with William Gillette, an American actor, in a play adapted from several stories and entitled *Sherlock Holmes*. Gillette was mainly interested in creating a vehicle for his own talents and hence did most of the writing, even marrying Holmes to the female lead at the end of the play! In spite of this heretical conclusion, the play enjoyed a great success and Gillette played in it again and again for the next thirty years in America and Great Britain.

Having made this compromise with Holmes, Doyle went a step further and began the third Holmes novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. However, he made it clear that this was an adventure that took place before Holmes's battle with Moriarty, and that the master detective was still lying at the bottom of the Reichenbach Falls. When it began to be serialized in *The Strand*, the circulation of the magazine soared by thirty thousand copies and people queued in long lines to buy each successive installment. Newnes published the novel separately in 1902 to tremendous sales.

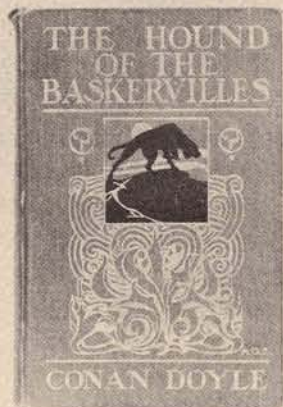
Holmes finally returned in the October 1903 issue of *The Strand*, in the story "The Adventure of the Empty House." It now seemed that Holmes had not died, but that he had led Watson and the world to believe so, in order that he might track down the late Professor Moriarty's gang in secrecy. Thus, as Holmes explained to the astounded Watson when he appeared in his study one day, he had faked clues to suggest his death and had spent the next few years traveling and posing, for part of the time, as a Norwegian explorer named Sigerson. If the explanation for Holmes's return was not wholly plausible, Holmes himself had often remarked that when you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth. It was of course impossible that Holmes could be dead.

The thirteen tales in this latest series, printed in *The Strand* in England and in *Col-*

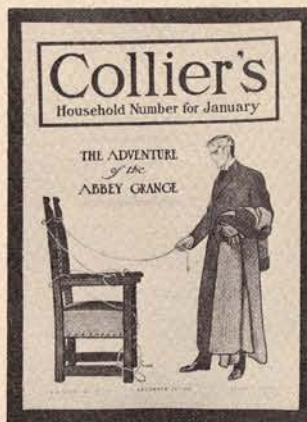
lier's in America, were published in 1905 as *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. Doyle continued to write new adventures of Holmes and Watson for almost the rest of his life. Another novel, *The Valley of Fear*, was published in 1915 after being serialized in *The Strand* and American newspapers. Another short story collection appeared in 1917: *His Last Bow*. The title story described the doings of Holmes and Watson during the early days of World War I. It was not Holmes's last bow. Doyle wrote twelve more adventures over the next nine years, which were collected as *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* in 1927. With this volume the Sherlock Holmes canon at last came to a close, comprising four novels and fifty-six short stories.

Though Doyle bowed to public demand for more and more Sherlock Holmes stories, they constituted, as far as he was concerned, only a small part of his literary reputation. He also wrote other novels, plays, short stories, poetry, and articles which in bulk, and often in importance to their author, greatly exceeded the Holmes tales. Doyle was very active in many of the social and political events of his times, devoting to them as much time and energy as to his writing. But the overriding concern in the last thirty years of his life was Spiritualism. He wrote profusely on the subject and spent a fortune toward its study. His death on July 7, 1930 drew world attention in the press and many paused to mourn the passing of one of the great men of their time. It is true that he was known chiefly then, as he is now, as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, but his many other accomplishments were not ignored. Books and articles about him are legion, and most of his major works have remained in print. Even without Sherlock Holmes, Doyle would not be forgotten.

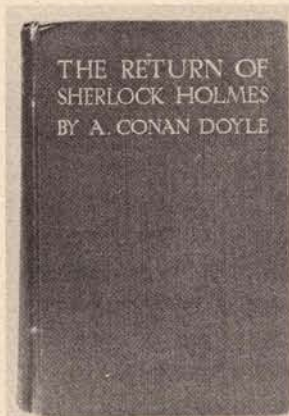
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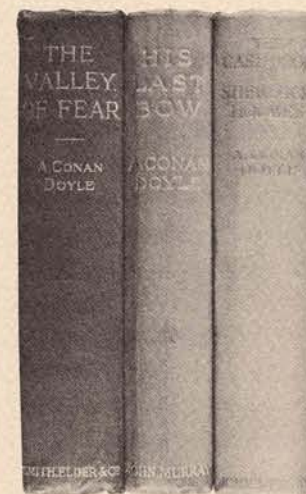
First edition, 1902



Issue with a Holmes story, with cover illustration by Frederic Dorr Steele



First edition, 1905



First editions: 1915, 1917, 1927



Dr. Philip S. Hench

With three doctors already so closely associated with the Sherlock Holmes stories, Doyle, Bell, and Watson, it is not surprising that another physician, Dr. Philip S. Hench, should find them of interest. Unlike Doyle, Dr. Hench had great success in his medical career. In the time he could spare from such pursuits, he managed to build one of the most notable Arthur Conan Doyle collections ever assembled.

Philip Showalter Hench was born in Pittsburgh on February 28, 1896, and grew up there. In 1916 he graduated from Lafayette College. From there Hench went to the University of Pittsburgh where in 1920 he earned the degree of doctor of medicine.

Dr. Hench became a fellow in the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine at the University of Minnesota in October 1921, from which he was granted the degree of master of science in internal medicine in 1931. Dr. Hench became a member of the staff of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester in 1923. In 1927 he married Mary Genevieve Kahler, whose family has close connections with the Mayo Clinic and supporting institutions.

Except for some months of study abroad in 1928 and 1929, and the holding of various medical posts in the Army during World War II (where he rose to the rank of colonel), Dr. Hench remained affiliated with the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota until his retire-

ment in 1957. At the Mayo Clinic he became a senior consultant and for many years headed the section on rheumatic diseases. He became an instructor in the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in 1928 and by 1947 had risen to the rank of full professor.

Dr. Hench is best known to the medical world for his research on the treatment of rheumatic diseases. In 1948 he introduced cortisone into clinical medicine. Cortisone had been developed after long years of laboratory investigations by Dr. Edward Kendall, his colleague at the Mayo Clinic. It proved to be an effective means of treatment for rheumatic diseases. In 1950 Hench and Kendall, together with Dr. Tadeus Reichstein of Switzerland, were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for their roles in the discovery and development of cortisone. This was one of many awards Dr. Hench received. He also was granted honorary degrees by universities in the United States and abroad, and was a member of five medical scholastic honorary societies.

In addition to his work at the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota, Dr. Hench served on numerous committees and commissions concerned with rheumatism and other medical subjects. He contributed to the literature of his field with over two hundred publications. Also he was an authority on the history of the conquest of yellow fever. From 1932 to 1948 Dr. Hench was chief editor of *Rheumatism Reviews*. He also served as associate editor of the *Annals of Rheumatic Diseases*. After his retirement in 1957, Dr. Hench remained widely active in his profession until his death on March 30, 1965.

Dr. Hench lived in an area conducive to the study and appreciation of Sherlock Holmes. He was an early member of The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, a Sherlock Holmes appreciation society formed in 1948. Similar societies had begun forming in the United States and Europe in the 1930s, and each selected a title making some reference to the Sherlock Holmes stories. That of The Norwegian Explorers recalls the disguise Holmes assumed when the world thought him dead at the bottom of the Reichenbach Falls.

Dr. Hench became best known to Holmesians as the originator of the idea to erect a plaque at Reichenbach Falls, to commemorate the battle between Holmes and Moriarty which took place there. While visiting Switzerland with his wife in 1953, Dr. Hench was shocked to discover that the residents of Meiringen and the

area around the falls were ignorant of the significance of their surroundings. It was largely through his efforts that a plaque was placed there by The Norwegian Explorers, in cooperation with The Sherlock Holmes Society of London in 1957. Dr. Hench recorded his experiences with the Reichenbach project in a delightful essay, "Of Violence at Meiringen," included in a volume of essays, *Exploring Sherlock Holmes*, published by The Norwegian Explorers in 1957.



Reichenbach Falls

Dr. Hench's interest in the Reichenbach project stimulated his collecting enterprise. Though he had assembled Doyle publications through the years, the bulk of the collection was acquired in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It consists of approximately eighteen hundred books, fifteen hundred issues of various periodicals, photographs, illustrations, manuscripts, and various sorts of memorabilia — all relating to Arthur Conan Doyle. The collection relates preponderantly to Sherlock Holmes, but Doyle's other works, particularly his non-Sherlockian fiction, are also well represented.

Among the unique Holmesian items in the collection there are two pages from the original manuscript of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Mounted and framed with the pages is an original drawing by Frederic Dorr Steele (1874-1944) illustrating the scene described by Doyle.

Steele is generally recognized as the best of the early American illustrators of the Sherlock Holmes tales. The collection holds eleven other original illustrations by Steele, as well as a great quantity of his correspondence relating to his Sherlockian art work.

The career of William Gillette, especially his portrayal of the great detective, is well documented in the Hench collection, which includes letters, Gillette's own scrapbooks and his photograph album containing notable theatrical personalities of his day.

Dr. Hench's interest in the Reichenbach affair is reflected in a sizable assemblage of material about Meiringen and vicinity, including newspaper and magazine clippings, travel literature, and seemingly innumerable depictions of the falls in various media. This material indicates that Dr. Hench was as thorough in his Holmesian research as in his medical investigations.

The chief strength of the collection is its numerous editions of the Sherlock Holmes stories. The first British appearances of most of the tales are present in a complete run of *The Strand*, and many of the initial American publications are represented by such periodicals as *Harper's Weekly*, *Lippincott's*, and *Collier's*.

Nearly a thousand books in the collection are first and other editions of the Holmes stories, including all British first editions and all but two of the American firsts. There are four copies of the very rare *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, 1887, containing the initial publication of *A Study in Scarlet*. Also there are a great number of translations of the adventures, in such languages as Czech, Dutch, French, Gaelic, Danish, Greek, Italian, Turkish, and Japanese, showing that Holmes and Watson are truly international figures.

There are also many books, pamphlets, and periodicals about Holmes and the adventures. Holmesians enjoy subscribing to the "happy pretense" that the great detective is a real person and that Doyle was merely Watson's literary agent. These writings try to answer such questions as the number of wives Watson had and the college Holmes attended. The collection also contains adaptations, pastiches, and parodies of the stories, suggesting that many authors, some of them notable, could not resist picking up the pen that Doyle at last put down. The memorabilia in the collection include such things as Holmesian Christmas and greeting cards, communications of various Sherlockian societies, and examples of Holmesian motifs

used in advertising.

Nearly three hundred books and numerous magazines contain Doyle's non-Sherlockian writings. His other fiction is well represented, as well as some of his work on the Boer War, Spiritualism, and other subjects. This material indicates the broad range of Doyle's authorship and demonstrates that the Sherlock Holmes stories are a relatively small portion of his work.

It was a notable achievement for Dr. Hench to assemble such a distinguished collection in such a short time, but he did not build it alone. Mrs. Hench was an active participant, and she gave her husband many of the most important items in the collection as gifts. Many volumes bear charming inscriptions from Mary to Philip and show that it was a team effort. This superb collection is now accessible to researchers through the generosity of Mrs. Hench who gave the collection to the University of Minnesota in December 1978.

Andrew S. Malec
Arthur Conan Doyle Bibliographer
Special Collections