



# Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S



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"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)

## Frederic Dorr Steele: The Definitve Illustrator

**I**n the chapter titled "The Evolution of a Profile," Vincent Starrett wrote of Frederic Dorr Steele's illustrations for the Sherlock Holmes stories:

What illustrations they have been! No happier association of author and artist can be imagined. . . For Mr. Steele was destined for his task as surely as Watson for his Sherlock Holmes. An ardent lover of the long detective, even before he undertook the drawings, his work has been from first to last a labor of affection. . . Sixty tales, in all, comprise the saga of Sherlock Holmes; and Steele has illustrated twenty-nine. While yet he lives and loves, and lifts his pencil, will he not do the other thirty-one? To some Sherlockian friend among the publishers, one offers the suggestion – a *Definitive Edition* – with *all* the stories pictured by Mr. Steele. (183-84.)

Starrett wrote this in *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, published in 1930. It would be nine years before George Macy of The Limited Editions Club contacted Steele about undertaking these illustrations, thirteen before the commission was approved and twenty years before the first of the Limited Editions Canon was published.

Frederic Dorr Steele was born to an artistic family on August 6, 1873 in northern Michigan, and lived in Wisconsin and Vermont before moving to New York City in 1889. He found employment in an architect's office before moving on to *Harper's* and *Illustrated American*. His free-lance work throughout his career was featured in *Life*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Century*, *The Metropolitan Magazine*, *The Delineator*, *The American Magazine*, *Redbook*, *Hearst's International*, *Liberty* and *McClure's*.



photo by Julie McKurus

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YEARS AGO

Photo from William Gillette's Photo Album, from the Philip S. Hench Collection (The Sherlock Holmes Collections)



Mark Twain

In April 1902 Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens 1835-1910) published *A Double-Barrelled Detective Story*. He began writing this burlesque of Sherlock Holmes in August 1901 and it appeared in *Harper's Monthly* for January and February 1902. Since 1902 the story has been reprinted in many forms, but it is best known to Sherlockians for appearing in *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1944) edited by Ellery Queen.

Looking back 100 years it is interesting to speculate what American influences might have affected Twain. His friend John Kendrick Bangs was the editor of *Harper's Weekly* until December 1901 and author of the humorous Sherlock Holmes story, *The Pursuit of the House-Boat* (1897). William H. Gillette, who

began his famous stage portrayal of Sherlock Holmes in 1899, had been a neighbor of Twain's in Nook Farm, Hartford, Connecticut. It is known that Twain helped pay for Gillette's early training and got him a part in the 1875 production of "Gilded Age." Both Gillette and Twain were charter members of the Players Club at 16 Gramercy Park in New York when it was founded in 1888. He had previously employed detectives in his books such as *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894) and *Tom Sawyer, Detective* (1896). The popularity of Sherlock Holmes in America by way of the original stories, parodies and stage productions encouraged Twain to write his story. *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia* references Twain's letter of September 6, 1901 to Henry H. Rogers, in which he writes that he had read the first installment of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which appeared in the *Strand Magazine* in August 1901.

*A Double-Barrelled Detective Story* is really a novella or condensed novel of 20,650 words in 10 chapters divided into two parts. It is an outrageous burlesque using grotesque violence and melodrama concerning revenge and spoofing detective fiction. The double barrel of this story is by theme and structure closer to *A Study in Scarlet*. The first barrel is a story of revenge with a man possessing the ability to track like a bloodhound. The second barrel, also about revenge, makes fun of Sherlock Holmes' detective ability. The final seven chapters are set in Hope Canyon, California where Sherlock Holmes visits his nephew Fetlock Jones. The story is subtitled, "We ought never to do wrong when people are looking." Chapter 4 contains the famous purple prose passage with, "far in the empty sky a solitary oesophagus slept upon motionless wing," which in later reprints was further spoofed with serious footnotes and quotes from newspapers.

The Sherlock Holmes Collections has both states of the American first edition of *A Double-Barrelled Detective Story*.

*The Bibliography of American Literature* lists it as number 3471 with the difference in states of undetermined sequence being the end papers and the location of the highest peak in a three-paneled picture. The Harper & Brothers Publishers edition had Lucius Hitchcock's illustrations with green borders, which appear with red borders in the first English edition by Chatto & Windus. Bernard Tauchnitz also published an edition in 1902 in Leipzig in his Collection of British and American Authors vol. 3591. John Bennett Shaw had collected several early translations of the story including a 1910 French edition, a 1914 Danish edition and a 1920 Spanish edition. Mark Twain's *A Double Barrelled Detective Story* was adapted for the stage by Robert St. Clair in 1954 and published in a paperback edition.

At the time Twain wrote this story, he and Arthur Conan Doyle had not yet met. Conan Doyle, along with many British authors, signed the telegram sent to Twain in 1905 for his 70th Birthday celebration at Delmonico's Restaurant in New York City. They finally met in England in 1907 and shared an interest in the Congo Reform Association. In 1979, Cyril Clemens, editor of *The Mark Twain Journal*, reported that Arthur Conan Doyle had been a member of the Mark Twain Society at the end of his life. ♡

Richard J. Sveum, M.D., B.S.I.

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# 50

## YEARS AGO

“I suppose the only way we can keep our subscription list complete is to force our subscribers not to meet each other,” George Macy wrote a member of the Limited Editions Club on Aug. 2, 1930. “I can understand a man marrying some girl because she owns our books; or I can understand a girl marrying a man for the same reason; but when two people owning our books marry each other, I suspect that there are other forces at work. Let me send you hearty good wishes, impersonal as these are.”

George Macy was the director of the Limited Editions Club, which he had founded in 1929 to publish twelve books a year for subscribers who enjoyed well-designed books that were often signed by the illustrators. The Club's first book was *Gulliver's Travels* (illustrated by Alexander King); some of the more interesting, and certainly more collectible, later titles were *Lysistrata* (illustrated and signed by Pablo Picasso) and *Ulysses* (illustrated and signed by Henri Matisse).

The subscriber who received that letter in 1930 was my mother. My father remained a subscriber, of course, and I grew up in a house where books were meant to be read. Limited Editions Club volumes were wonderful books, and the prefaces were just as interesting as the books. Over the years, Macy commissioned

many fine writers to write prefaces, including George Bernard Shaw for *Great Expectations*, G. K. Chesterton for *Vanity Fair*, Fletcher Pratt for *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, and Ray Bradbury for *The Mysterious Island*.

There was discussion of a Limited Editions Club *Sherlock Holmes* as early as 1935, and hopeful correspondence, and in 1943 George Macy announced that the Club would publish a five-volume set, edited by Vincent Starrett and illustrated by Frederic Dorr Steele. But there was a problem. It was a dual problem, actually: Denis and Adrian Conan Doyle. The story of their campaign against the Sherlockian world in general, and against the Baker Street Irregulars in particular, has been told by Jon L. Lellenberg in his excellent Baker Street Irregulars archival histories, and his *Irregular Crises of the Late 'Forties* (1999) includes a detailed account of the trials and tribulations that George Macy faced and eventually overcame.



Steele's 1939 illustration for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

The Limited Editions Club set finally appeared in 1950 and 1952, and it certainly deserves to be celebrated fifty years later. There were eight volumes, edited by Edgar W. Smith, illustrated by Frederic Dorr Steele and other artists (Steele had died in 1944, with

much of his work for the set undone), and beautifully designed by W. A. Dwiggin. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* was published in three volumes in 1950, with “Notes on the Collation” by Edgar W. Smith and an introduction by Vincent Starrett; *The Later Adventures* in three volumes in 1952, with introductions by Elmer Davis, Fletcher Pratt, and Rex Stout; and *The Final Adventures* in two volumes in 1952, with introductions by Anthony Boucher and Christopher Morley, and an epilogue by Edgar W. Smith.

There were 1500 subscribers to the Limited Editions Club, and thus 1500 copies. And, demonstrating as usual that limitation statements should not be trusted, there were an additional 15 stated “presentation copies” of *The Adventures*, and 25 stated “editor’s copies” of *The Later Adventures* and *The Final Adventures*. Completists will also want *The Monthly Letter of The Limited Editions Club* for June 1950

(“Elementary, my dear Watson”), which explained in four well-written pages the history of the set; and for June 1952 (“The Adventure of the Murderous Irishman”), which dealt with Arthur Conan Doyle (the Irishman), his decision to dispose of Sherlock Holmes, and some of the interesting things that Sherlockians were doing.

George Macy also presided over the Heritage Press and the Heritage Club, which

later published its own three-volume edition of the Limited Editions Club set, offering the text and illustrations, but only Smith’s “Notes on the Collation” and the introduction by Starrett. The first volume appeared in 1952 and was reprinted in 1957, when the second and third volumes

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## From the President

I am proud to announce that Steven Doyle, B.S.I. (“The Western Morning News”) has accepted an invitation to be the guest speaker at the annual meeting of The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Mark your calendars for this exceptional program to be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2002 at the Elmer L. Andersen Library.

The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections had the opportunity to recognize and thank our Charter Members with the last Newsletter. About one third of current membership has been with us since 1997 when we started the Newsletter, and we look forward to maintaining that connection. We are always looking to increase our membership while recog-

nizing the invaluable support we receive from groups such as The Occupants of the Empty House who annually contribute proceeds from their auction. In the words of my daughters’ Girl Scout song, “Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold.”

Theofanis G. Stavrou, President of the University of Minnesota Friends of the Library, was honored at the Annual Dinner on April 18, 2002. The University Friends of the Library hosted the Gala Grand Reopening of Walter Library on June 5, 2002. The Walter Library building was third home of the University Library when it was completed in 1924, and the Arthur Upson Room located in the Walter Library was the original home of Special Collections and Rare Books.

The new Walter Library will contain the Science and Engineering Library along with the new Digital Technology Center. The exterior of the Roman Renaissance building with red bricks and Bedford limestone trim and colonnaded portico was preserved along with some interior architectural detail; the rest is very high tech. If you can’t visit in person you can visit their website at [sciweb.lib.umn.edu](http://sciweb.lib.umn.edu).

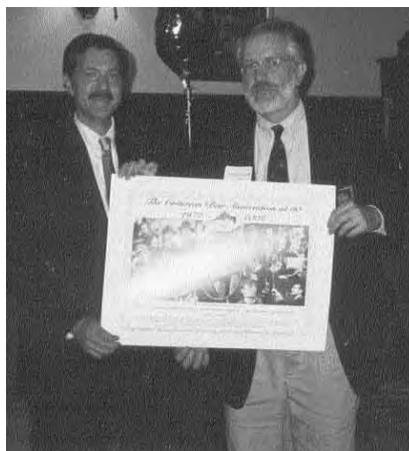
The University Library’s Capital Campaign will conclude in 2003. The Sherlock Holmes Collections is encouraging everyone to donate to the E.W. McDiarmid Curator Endowment. With your help we can reach our goal to be the World Center for the study of Sherlock Holmes. ♣

Richard J. Sveum, M.D., B.S.I.

## Acquisitions

David Hammer continues his ongoing donation of his Sherlockian library to the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Mr. Hammer recently forwarded three large boxes to add to those previously received. One of the newly arrived boxes contained manuscripts, papers, ephemera and pamphlets and the other two boxes contained books.

The STUD dinner, held on May 4, 2002 in Chicago, was the perfect opportunity for Don Terras to present the 30th Anniversary poster of the Criterion Bar Association to Friends President Richard J. Sveum. In addition to the various images of Holmes on screen, the poster lists past presidents and the founders of the society.



Don Terras and Richard J. Sveum

Hugo Koch donated *The Frozen Pirate*, by W. Clark Russell, published by The Battered Silicon Dispatch box in 2001. The book carries the note “This edition is dedicated to the late Cameron Hollyer who first introduced the author to the publisher and to Hugo Koch whose Christmas offering first suggest-

ed the idea to the publisher.” Mr. Koch previously donated his referenced monograph, privately printed for Christmas 1999.

John and Margie Pollack donated a copy of the playbill from “Sherlock Holmes & The Curious Adventure of the Clockwork Prince,” described as “A Victorian Romp” written by Cleve Haubold with music composed by James Alfred Hitt. The play ran from April 5 thru May 4 this year at the Spirit of the North Theater in Duluth, Minnesota.

Leslie Klinger recently sent the manuscript material for *The Hound of the Baskervilles: The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library*. This is the latest in the series of Klinger’s reference library. ♣

# "An Extraordinarily Nasty Reply"

Investigated by Jon Lellenberg

In March's newsletter, Richard Sveum wrote about Barbara and Christopher Roden donating the John Bennett Shaw/Jack Tracy correspondence that they acquired from the auction of Tracy's effects by the Nevada county where he died intestate. I was sorry to see, toward the end of the article, Tracy telling Shaw that he had written to Dame Jean Conan Doyle about including "The Stonor Case" (a version of the "Speckled Band" stage-play) in his book *Sherlock Holmes: The Published Apocrypha*, and claiming that he had "received an extraordinarily nasty reply, categorically denying permission to publish."

Not everyone knew Jack Tracy or Dame Jean Conan Doyle. I knew them both, and I knew which one was and which one was not capable of "an extraordinarily nasty reply." It may be foolish to let something written by Tracy in 1978 annoy me in 2002, especially since both he and Jean have been gone for some years. But I knew her for 20 years, represented her literary interests in America, and find it impossible to let Tracy's remark stand unchallenged.

Thanks to Chris Roden, I have a copy of Jean's May 8, 1978, letter to Tracy. She was answering his of April 17th, in which he informed her of his plans for the *Apocrypha* and asked to include "Angels of Darkness" (Conan Doyle's unfinished play based on the American episodes in *A Study in Scarlet*) and "The Stonor Case." Jean replied:

There have been several enquiries regarding "The Angels of Darkness," but my father did not want it published, nor did my brothers, and nor do I. The reason is that it was a very early effort and does not fit into what became the Holmes-Watson concept. My

father only kept it as a curiosity and, since his death, this is what we, his family, felt about it.<sup>1</sup> I see that Pierre Nordon refers and which I see you plan to include in your collection anyway. In view of these facts I'm sure you will agree that to publish these works could hardly be described as "putting some (of my father's) most interesting work in print at last." It is because they were not worthwhile pieces of work that they were not published in my father's lifetime.<sup>2</sup>

I do not see anything "extraordinarily nasty" in this reply.

In 1978, I was putting together the system to recapture the U.S. Conan Doyle copyrights for Jean under the new Copyright Act in effect that year, and to represent her when recapture took effect. I was also, with misgivings, informally advising Tracy in his editorial plans, including the creation of his own imprint, Gaslight Publications. So I corresponded with both of them frequently. But a check of my letters from Tracy turns up no complaint about Jean's reply re: "The Stonor Case." Instead, his letter of June 13, 1980, to Jean, discussing Gaslight's forthcoming Centennial Series of early Conan Doyle novels, remarked: "*Sherlock Holmes: The Published Apocrypha* will be published by Houghton Mifflin next month. I know you're not in sympathy with the project, but if you will allow me to present you with a copy I'm sure you will find that the approach at least is serious and respectful." And so it was, on the whole — though marred for Jean by some gratuitously spiteful comments in Tracy's introduction:

Sir Arthur was his own worst critic — in more ways than one, because his self-judgment was not always good. He bitterly resented the

unauthorized publication of those works he considered unworthy, and following his death in 1930 his children became even more protective, aggressively limiting which of their father's writings might reach the public. For nearly forty years Sherlockians railed, helplessly and politely, at these "recalcitrant heirs," but recently the copyrights were sold, and the new proprietors are more open to reason.

I informed Tracy with some asperity that the copyright sale to which he referred had in fact occurred seven years before, and was about to be ancient history — for at that very moment, Jean was in the process of recapturing her father's copyrights.

I could hear his gasp of dismay all the way from Bloomington, Indiana. But, as others can testify, admonishment seldom had much effect on Tracy. In my files is the subsequent September 12, 1980, letter that I received from him, in which he wrote: "You'll be happy to hear that since we spoke last, I've received two gracious letters from Dame Jean about the *Apocrypha*, and while she sticks to her guns about 'Angels of Darkness' she doesn't consider the book at all offensive. All your elaborate doomsaying gone for naught."

Jean always acknowledged Tracy's devotion to her father's work. "I'm so sorry that Jack Tracy has turned out to be rather a disappointment to you," she wrote to me on November 5, 1980:

He wrote to apologize for the remark in the *Apocrypha*, indicating that he'd had a reprimand from you. In replying I passed it off lightly, as I'm all for freedom to express one's opinion, however much one disagrees with it —

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## "An Extraordinarily Nasty Reply" *Continued*

however, privately I thought it revealed his ignorance of the true facts, insensitivity, and a certain tastelessness. However, I thought his Afterwords, in both books [the other being the first Conan Doyle Centennial Series novel, *The Firm of Girdlestone*], were really splendid and they were good productions. I'm very sorry to hear now from you that the offensive paragraph [in the *Apocrypha*] is now the basis of the publisher's publicity for the book. That really is too bad.<sup>3</sup>

Tracy helped make Conan Doyle not only respectable but the focus of serious interest in Sherlockian circles, and Jean was grateful to him for that. "Thank you very much for your letter and the Afterword for *The Firm of Girdlestone* which I found interesting reading," she'd written to him on October 6, 1980:

As I wrote to you before — how interested, and flattered, my father would have been to read your criticisms. It is a joy to know that you, and others, are paying such tribute to his merit as a writer, at this time. A university "Reader" of Literature was here only yesterday who felt strongly that he had been denied his proper status in the literary world. It was very heartening to hear such opinions, and to read your words.

The Centennial Series titles were in the public domain in America, but Tracy also pursued projects where Jean's permission was required. One goal of his was to edit and publish an edition of Conan Doyle's autobiography *Memories and Adventures*. On February 20, 1981, he wrote to Peter Blau about seeking a commercial publisher for it, remarking that "what's in Dame Jean's interest may not necessarily be in Gaslight's, although I hardly think

that's actually the case." Four days later he assured his editor at Houghton Mifflin that he was "reasonably confident that we could prevail upon Dame Jean to write an Introduction to the new edition." More worrisome was her dislike of his (also never fulfilled) plan to write a novel about her father. "Dame Jean hates the idea, of course, which is understandable," he told Blau on August 5, 1981, "and won't review the manuscript, but perhaps she'll be soothed when the book comes out and people tell her it ain't half bad (unless Lellenberg gets to her first)." By now *I* was the villain of the piece, but I wasn't the only one telling Tracy that Jean wouldn't care for the idea, judging from Tracy's letter to Blau on October 5, 1981:

Your comment about Dame Jean in your August 9 card is the second time you've suggested that she might freeze out me or Gaslight because she is in disagreement with some of my projects or statements. Such a thing is utterly foreign to everything I've ever heard about her and to my own experience with her graciousness even after the appearance of the *Apocrypha*.

Which is a far cry from the idea of Jean Conan Doyle as a writer of extraordinarily nasty replies.

"I don't know why people insist on assuming my novel is in any way critical of Spiritualism," Tracy wrote further to Blau on October 19, 1981:

It isn't. Quite the reverse. Indeed, Dame Jean has told me the main reason she won't read the book is because as a historical novelist I can't help but get little things wrong, and that would disturb her. I don't think the Spiritualism angle is the issue. She just doesn't

like today's trend of writing about the recent past — pointed out Brian Garfield's *Paladin* as a particularly distasteful book. A lot of people seem to be claiming to speak for Dame Jean these days (I don't mean you). She speaks rather well for herself, and I think I'll take her at her word.

So now we see Tracy as Jean's *defender* (and of course, subtly, his own at the same time). What Jean actually told him, in a July 2, 1981, letter that illustrates both her views and her personality, was this:

After all the reasons for thanking you, and having agreed with you over so much, it's with sadness that I have to tell you that I am utterly opposed to your latest venture — writing a fictional story about my father. I've always had the deepest distaste for this modern innovation — the use of famous people, living or dead, at the centre of works of fiction. The plays about Churchill, for instance, disgusted me and one was bound to question the author's motives. In these times when all moral standards seem to be slipping over the horizon, and "to make money" is put before moral considerations, taking such liberties with the characters and lives of real people seems to be something that should be resisted. It is a dangerous blurring of the margin between what is true and what is false. My views may seem very old fashioned to you, but I know my father would have despised this type of "literature." He brought me up to have a deep respect for "facts" and for truth, so it follows that "faction" is an anathema to me, as it is to many others, I'm glad to say. I appreciate your book would

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## "An Extraordinarily Nasty Reply" Continued

reflect the admiration you feel for my father, but however accurately you may think you are portraying him, his family life, and his Spiritualistic lecture tours, you would be bound to get much of it completely wrong. How could it be otherwise when you never knew him, or us, and were not around at the time? Of course you will have had the advantage of reading *Our American Adventure* and *Our Second American Adventure*, which will have given you some of the facts. It's true, as I remember clearly, that the New York press was extremely brash, by British standards at that time, but the vast crowds which came to the lectures were not, and my father was given a wonderful reception wherever he went in public. I remember that, as a family, we were very happy on the tour; occasional controversies were only to be expected, but both my parents felt the tours were immensely successful. So many accounts of my father and Spiritualism, Houdini etc tell only half the story — writers' research lacks depth. I've too much on my plate to correspond about Spiritualism, a subject which cannot be dealt with in a few pages, let alone paragraphs, but whenever I hear someone say they do not believe in it, I wonder how many years they have spent in practical investigation. It took my father many years before he was convinced. He said that if a photographer takes a whole roll of films and only one comes out the case for photography is proved; that it's the same with Spiritualism, one may get many false messages from the "departed," come across many fraudulent mediums, but every now and again there is

irrefutable proof. My father advised me to be sceptical, although not antagonistically so, until given proof of the genuine powers of a medium. Excellent advice.

From the above you will have gathered that I do not want to be associated with your book in any way whatsoever, or with the publishers, however well intentioned your book may be. This letter is far longer than I'd intended but I felt that your past courtesies to me and the great interest you have in my father's works, deserved more than a curt denial of any co-operation, and of my fundamental opposition to fictional novels about my father (which I cannot overlook) and therefore my personal distaste for your project.

As Tracy noted, Dame Jean spoke very well for herself. And the "extraordinarily nasty reply" he claimed to have received from her evaporates upon examination.

Why then did Tracy say such a thing to John Bennett Shaw? People who knew Tracy probably require no explanation. After a while, most of us who dealt with him shrugged and went our own way; we were able to take the good with the bad, for, whatever his personality, his work was first-rate, both his own writings and his presentation of other people's work (including mine). But you never had to take the bad with the good from Jean Conan Doyle, who was a woman of firm views but also of unfailing courtesy, even when she did not agree with you. It had not always been so among Conan Doyle's children — so how fortunate it was for us that the last of them was her.

Thanks to Peter Blau and Christopher Roden for the use of letters in their collections. ♣

<sup>1</sup> Tracy quotes from this letter in his introduction to *Sherlock Holmes: The Published Apocrypha* (Houghton Mifflin, 1980): "the unpublished Apocrypha remain so. 'My father did not wish it published, nor did my brothers, and nor do I,' Dame Jean Conan Doyle, the last surviving direct descendent, has written to us."

<sup>2</sup> In 1997, Dame Jean finally agreed to a BSI edition of "Angels of Darkness" with a scholarly apparatus that would present the work in context, and the executors of her Estate, following her death at the end of that year, also agreed to the BSI edition that was published this year.

<sup>3</sup> "For 40 years the Doyle estate suppressed efforts to anthologize the six pieces, from the hand of Sir Arthur, collected here for the first time," opened the promotional flyer sent by Houghton Mifflin to *Baker Street Journal* subscribers at the end of September 1980: "For the most part, they are known to only a handful of Holmes experts — but recently the copyrights were sold . . . and the new proprietors have finally granted permission to make this collected edition possible."

## Musings

**H**aving been both a Scout and a Scout leader, I particularly enjoyed Dick Sveum's reference to the Girl Scout song "Make New Friends, but Keep the Old." I believe we could reword that to "Write new articles, but remember the old ones" to apply to the previous issue of this newsletter. Two fine Sherlockians took time to comment upon different articles from the March issue.

Andrew Malec, B.S.I. referenced the law case brought by Charles Frohman against the producers of "Sherlock Holmes, Detective: or The Sigh (sic) of the Four" and pointed to the December 1975 and March 1976 issues of *The Baker Street Miscellanea*. John Nieminski's December article covered the brief but tumultuous run of the play written by John Arthur Fraser. Nieminski wrote that "A stock company effort presented jointly with a group of vaudeville acts...lasted for but four of its six scheduled performances, all in Chicago in May 1901. The run was terminated on May 10 as a result of a court injunction stemming from a suit brought by Charles Frohman...The Hopkins Amusement Company, Fraser's producers, appealed the Circuit Court action to the First District, but lost the case in October 1902." The District Court opinion, quoted in the article, states "...it is apparent that the latter [by Gillette] may suffer in reputation by the production of an inferior play under a name so closely identified

with that produced by appellee." Mr. Nieminski cited reviews which left no question as to the inferior quality of the play, including "...Mr. Fraser has taken pains to excise every vestige of existing material in the tale and has formed his play of the uninteresting incidents in a crude and unskillful fashion." The March 1976 editorial comments gave further credence to the merciful cessation of the play. Having now read the script, the commentator wrote "...the shade of Thespis assuredly heaved a sigh of gratitude when Charles Frohman's injunction rang down the curtain." Our thanks to Andrew for this information.

Jon Lellenberg, B.S.I. has also contributed an article in response to the John Bennett Shaw- Jack Tracy letters that Christopher and Barbara Roden donated to the Sherlock Holmes Collections. I would like to thank him for his additional clarification as to the "good and the bad" aspects for those of us who did not know Tracy. Also, as you will note in both the lead and the 50 Years Ago articles there are references to the BSI History series, edited by Jon. The first three volumes of the archival series are hard to locate. If you don't want to go through the agony of trying to find books you know you should have purchased while they were still available, check the web site [www.bakerstreetjournal.com](http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com), where Volume 4, *Irregular Proceedings of the Mid 'Forties* (including postage, \$31.95 U.S./\$32.95 outside the U.S.) and

Volume 5, *Irregular Crises of the Late 'Forties* (\$37.95/ \$38.95) remain available.

We are truly pleased to have Peter E. Blau author our 50 Years Ago article. He brings his extensive personal knowledge of The Limited Editions Club as well as his unique storytelling ability to this piece. As you can see from Tim Johnson's update, Special Collections and Rare Books has been a busy place this spring. Dick Sveum has given us an overview of the activities of the Friends of the Library as well as the 100 Years Ago article about Mark Twain. What connections we have in this issue: Mark Twain was a neighbor of William Gillette, whose portrait as Holmes was drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele, who illustrated one of Twain's works. And all three of them belonged to the Players Club.

Lastly, in doing preliminary research for this issue, we came upon the 1952 pamphlet *The Sherlock Holmes Hoax* by Pope Hill, Sr. This short pamphlet was but a piece of his original lengthy manuscript which apparently was never published. If anyone has any information about this missing manuscript, please contact me. We would love to solve the mystery of what happened to it. ♡

Julie McKuras, A.S.H., B.S.I.

## An Update from the Collections

**T**he end of the academic year brings with it a final flurry of activity. This year has been no exception. For the most part we enjoy this frenzied pace, although we sometimes catch ourselves coming and going (but hopefully not double-booked) as we move through the springtime days. Some of this year's frenzy is connected with our massive migration to a new integrated library system. I've received notice that our fiscal-year-end programs ran successfully. This is a cause for some celebration, as this year's fiscal close came early so that our business office (and the rest of us) might continue to prepare for the move to the new system scheduled to be operational at the beginning of July. Like any move, this one has been accompanied by a bit of stress. Happily that stress has (and continues to be) mitigated by a number of tours, presentations, conferences, and classes through which we have the opportunity to talk about the Sherlock Holmes Collections and in general enjoy working in the midst of such a library and all its wonderful collections.

On April 5th we enjoyed a visit from Marshall Blankenship and his wife and had the chance to show them the Andersen Library and the Holmes Collections. This was followed a few days later by a James Ford Bell Library public lecture by the noted writer/producer James Burke and an end-of-week meeting in St. Cloud with other librarians on the subject of leadership development. The following weeks in April were equally energetic: a visit from Ulf Beijbom from the Swedish Emigrant Institute (a colleague from my days working with Swedish materials in Chicago); a retirement party for the University archivist; a visit from Walter Hammady of the Perishable Press; a presentation and tour to a group of Twin Cities librarians and media specialists; a presentation to The Manuscripts Society on the Holmes Collections; the wedding of my assis-

tant curator, Susan Stekel, from the James Ford Bell Library; and a keynote welcome and session presentation to a symposium for library paraprofessionals and support staff.

May continued in the same lively fashion, beginning with a visit from Marshall Weber from the Brooklyn book artists' cooperative in Brooklyn, New York. (Is it a good sign that these months both began with visits from Marshalls?) This was quickly followed by a three-day conference involving about 300 archivists, for which we played host. Two days later we hosted a reception for Cornell West as part of the University's "Great Conversations" series. Two days after that we had the double treat of a visit during the day with about 60 students from Minnetonka West Middle School (during which we capped our presentation with a view of the Hound manuscript) and an evening lecture by recently retired Bell Library curator Carol Urness. The week ended with the annual Festival of Greek Letters and a lecture by Professor Andreas M. Kazamias from the Universities of Wisconsin and Athens.

On May 14th I was the luncheon speaker for the St. Paul chapter of the American Association of University Women. My topic for the day was "Sherlock Holmes and Minnesota." The next day I attended a reception at the Science Museum of Minnesota for the exhibit "Mesopotamia in Minnesota: Cuneiform Texts in Twin Cities Collections." We had some of our tablets on loan for this exhibit. The following week I attended an all-day collection development symposium and then a meeting the next day with an



photo by Julie McKuras

Timothy Johnson with the class from the Minnetonka West Middle School

expert from Indiana on copyright. There was a brief respite for the Memorial Day weekend (with some added days off thrown in) and then an end-of-month lecture by Julian Plante entitled "Documenting the Minnesota Book World." My highlight for June will be the opportunity to speak to the "Sub-Librarians" at the American Library Association annual meeting in Atlanta.

You may wonder at this point at the recitation of this end-of-year calendar. Not all of these events deal with the Sherlock Holmes Collections. That is true. But it is also true that all these events allow me the opportunity to at least mention Holmes in passing and to give the hearer some indication of the depth and breadth of the world's largest collection relating to the consulting detective. And who knows? Maybe among those middle school students will come another member of the Friends and the Norwegian Explorers. Maybe among those at lectures or receptions will be another donor who takes an interest in keeping forever green the memory of the Master. What will the rest of the summer bring? Who can tell? But we have the sense that whatever comes it will be both interesting and relaxing. May this find you well in all your summer endeavors. ♡

Tim Johnson

## Frederic Dorr Steele Continued from Page 1

photo by Julie McKuras



But it was his drawings for *Collier's* that began and insured his place in Sherlockian history. His illustrations of the Great Detective graced the pages of the magazine for the 1903–1905 series of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. He would eventually illustrate “twenty-six of the last thirty-three Sherlock Holmes stories for their initial American periodical appearances.” (Malec) He met and corresponded with many of the most prominent Sherlockians of the day and attended a number of the annual Baker Street Irregulars dinners beginning in 1934, as well as maintaining a membership in the Players Club for almost forty years.

His career declined during the 1930's and a commission for The Limited Editions Club was a promising one. The Archival History of the Baker Street Irregulars, edited by Jon L. Lellenberg, B.S.I., gives a detailed account of the years, problems and efforts that went into publishing this edition. In the series, portions of the November 1939 – June 1944 corre-

spondence, which consists of Macy's originals and Steele's draft copies, are cited. (These letters were donated to the University of Minnesota in 1986 by Steele's three children.)

The Club's 1944 prospectus for the Canon indicated that seventy new illustrations by Steele would be featured. But as the saying goes, time waits for no man. Frederic Dorr Steele died on July 6, 1944, leaving his project unfinished but a number of new draw-

ings as well as reworked illustrations ready for inclusion in The Limited Editions Canon. Edgar W. Smith notified the Baker Street Irregulars on July 8 of Steele's passing, stating in a note that was reprinted in the Fall 1991 *Baker Street Miscellanea*, “It was Frederic Dorr Steele, and not Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who gave to millions of Americans their conception of Sherlock Holmes. That fact, one feels, is all the monument that Freddie Steele would want.”

Much has been written about Steele. Featured here are several of Steele's drawings from the collection of Philip S. Hench, M.D., that are now a part of The Sherlock Holmes Collections. For more information on Steele, Andrew Malec's *The*

*Frederic Dorr Steele Memorial Collection* is available on the Web site for the University of Minnesota Libraries at <http://www.umn.edu/rare/> ♡

Julie McKuras, A.S.H., B.S.I.

### References

Malec, Andrew. *The Frederic Dorr Steele Memorial Collection*. Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Libraries, 1987.

Starrett, Vincent. *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. 1930. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.



photo by Julie McKuras

## 50 Years Ago Continued from Page 3

were published. The first volume was again reprinted in 1971, and the second and third volumes in 1972. And *Sandglass*, the Heritage Club's monthly newsletter also is a collectible: it reprinted (in smaller format and as "Elementary, my dear Watson" and "You know my methods, Watson") the earlier Limited Editions Club newsletters.

Macy, who received his Investiture ("The Bruce-Partington Plans") in the Baker Street Irregulars in 1951, died in 1956, having brought to press and to the public (well, at least some of the public) an edition that was both attractive and well edited, and Sherlockians are greatly indebted to him.

There were, eventually, many Sherlockians who wanted to read all those fine introductions, but either couldn't find or couldn't afford to buy the Limited Editions Club set; Edgar W. Smith reprinted his "Notes on the Collation" and all of the introductions in 350 copies of *Introducing Sherlock Holmes* in 1959, along with other interesting introductions from earlier editions of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

George Macy's wife Helen had continued his work, but sold the company in 1971, when it began a slow and then precipitate decline. Eventually it was rescued and resurrected as the Easton Press, which now is reprinting older titles and publishing new ones. The Easton Press reprinted the Heritage Press edition in 1987 as the *Complete Sherlock Holmes 100th Anniversary Edition* in three leather-bound volumes, with full-color frontispieces by Frederic Dorr Steele. And the Easton Press issued a "Collector's Edition" in 1996, again in three leather-bound volumes, but with all of the Limited Editions Club introductions (and with a new portrait of Arthur Conan Doyle by Richard Spark as the full-color frontispiece of the first volume).

There are, of course, more stories to tell about the Limited Editions Club set, but space for only one. Observant readers will have noted, perhaps, the illustration that accompanies this essay, and recalling that Frederic Dorr Steele began illustrating the Canon in 1903 in *Collier's*, they may be wondering how there can be a Steele illustration for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. There were in fact four Steele illustrations for the story in the Limited Editions Club set, which noted for each one that they were "drawn especially for this edition."

Not quite: two illustrations, including this one, are signed and dated "Steele 1939" and were drawn for Twentieth Century-Fox, which published them in a full-color supplement in the *Motion Picture Herald* (Mar. 18, 1939); the supplement was available to theaters to publicize the film, and one Boston newspaper used them, noting that "if the detective doesn't bear a very close resemblance to Basil Rathbone, the screen prototype—well, that's because the fog was so heavy on Dartmoor when Rathbone posed."

Frederic Dorr Steele's original artwork for this illustration, now owned by the Sherlock Holmes Collections, came to the University of Minnesota in the collection of Philip S. Hench, who also owned the two pages of manuscript that describe the scene that Frederic Dorr Steele illustrated. Lew David Feldman assembled the triptych for Hench, who framed and displayed it that way. Treasure trove indeed . . . ♡

Peter E. Blau, B.S.I.



The *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections which seek to promote the activities, interests and needs of the Special Collections and Rare Books Department, University of Minnesota Libraries.

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## Using the Collections

**M**arsha Pollak of San Jose, CA recently visited the Sherlock Holmes Collections while on a short trip to Minnesota. She is shown in the accompanying photograph holding the book of BBC Photographs, from John Bennett Shaw's collection ♡



photo by Julie McKuras

Timothy Johnson and Marsha Pollak

## Remembrances

In supporting the Sherlock Holmes Collections, many donors have made contributions either in honor or in memory of special persons.

### IN HONOR OF

Nathan Patterson  
Christopher and Barbara Roden  
Richard J. Sveum, M.D., B.S.I.

### IN MEMORY OF

David W. Bradley  
W. Clark Russell  
Henry Swiggum  
Jack Tracy  
Bill Williams

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Showsaku Mashimo

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Bill Mason  
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