

SIFTING THE WRITINGS UPON THE WRITINGS

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The shelves of the student of the Canon are often filled with far more material than the student can ever hope to assimilate or even review. The purpose of this work is to provide a checklist and brief review of the important sources of scholarship extant. Availability of some of the material may be limited, and alternate editions are suggested whenever possible. The commentary given is highly personal and reflects my own preferences and usage of the works, which may differ substantially from the student seeking in-depth information on a narrow topic. Instead, this checklist is intended to permit the serious student to begin a review of the work of other scholars on a topic of interest.

I have not attempted, in compiling this work, to make this checklist in any way a competitor with the fine lists of Sherlockian materials created by John Bennett Shaw or Otto Penzler. Those lists fill very different purposes, in attempting to define, respectively, a “basic” Holmesian library and a collection of “indispensable” collectibles. Readers of the *Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* that I have edited will recognize these materials as forming the backbone of that work.

ANNOTATED EDITIONS OF THE CANON

1. **Annotated Sherlock Holmes.** Edited by William S. Baring-Gould. New York: Clarkson N. Potter (1967). 2 vols. This monumental work is out of print and may be found in several editions, including a one-volume Clarkson N. Potter edition (1986) and a one-volume Wing Books edition (1992). While the scholarship reflected was, of course, all written before 1967, it remains an essential tool, not least for its generous reproduction of illustrations. Baring-Gould also provides fine overviews of the Master on the stage, in film, and in parodies and pastiches, as well as idiosyncratic biographies of Holmes, Watson, and Moriarty. The volumes are a bit difficult to use without consulting the table of contents frequently, for the stories of the Canon are arranged in Baring-Gould’s unique chronological order. However, there is a handy table of the cases at the rear, as well as a fairly complete bibliography of materials referenced (including specific articles appearing in periodicals). There is no index.
2. **Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: A Textbook of Friendship.** Edited by Christopher Morley. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. (1944). This is the work of the first annotator, and Morley brings sparkling wit to the task as

well as tantalizing questions that were (then) unanswered. Sadly, the volume contains only an excerpt from *Study In Scarlet*, *Sign of Four*, “Final Problem,” “Empty House,” and “Bruce-Partington Plans.” There is no index.

3. **Oxford Sherlock Holmes.** General Editor: Owen Dudley Edwards. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1993). 9 vols. The text used for the Canon is that chosen by the editors, and the work contains much useful information about Arthur Conan Doyle and the literary and contemporary sources for the tales. There is also a wealth of definitional material regarding confusing or obscure terms. However, the editors decidedly do not “play the Game,” and the work seems to ignore (with limited exception) most Sherlockian scholarship. The work is printed in the format of the original nine collections and novels, and each has a fine introduction by the volume editor. There is no index, and the endnotes are not numbered in the text, only referenced by page at the end of each volume.
4. **Company Canon.** Edited by Phillip Weller. Fareham, Hampshire, UK: Sherlock Publications (1994-95). These little spiral-bound books have been copiously annotated by Weller and provide a great deal of interesting information, as well as some references to other scholars’ work. Sadly, only “Dancing Men,” “Devil’s Foot,” “Empty House,” “Engineer’s Thumb,” “Stock-Broker’s Clerk,” “Lady Frances Carfax,” and “Thor Bridge” were produced. Endnotes are used.

CONTEMPORARY VICTORIAN SOURCE MATERIAL

The following is by no means an exhaustive list, and there may be substitute volumes that are equally useful. For example, in lieu of the *Britannica*, there are numerous smaller encyclopedias, such as the *Student’s Cyclopaedia* (2 vols.), published in 1900.

5. **Encyclopedia Britannica.** The ninth edition, available in many reprint editions, was published in 1888 and therefore has much valuable contemporary information. For the later stories, the eleventh edition, published in 1910, is better organized and more interesting than the little-regarded tenth edition. The indices of these volumes are extensive.
6. **Whitaker’s Almanack.** London: The Stationery Office (2000). The almanac has much irreplaceable contemporary information, and the Baker Street household surely had a copy. Alas, antiquarian copies are extremely scarce and very expensive. Fortunately, Whitaker’s published an inexpensive replica of the 1900 *Almanack*. There is an extensive table of contents.
7. **Bradshaw’s August 1887 Railway Guide.** Newton Abbot, U.K.: David & Charles (1968). Holmes himself must have had a copy of this indispensable

- timetable, but alas, antiquarian copies are extremely scarce and very expensive. Even this reprint edition is expensive and scarce.
8. **Warner's Pocket Medical Dictionary.** Philadelphia: William R. Warner & Co. (1897). Although American, this is a handy source of Victorian medical terms.
 9. **Merck Manual.** New York: Merck & Co. (1999). Merck published a facsimile first edition of its 1899 *Merck Manual*, described as a ready-reference book to the "entire eligible *Materia Medica*" of the day. Dr. Watson must have had a copy, although he does not mention it.
 10. **Household Oracle.** Edited by Alfred H. Miles. London: Hutchinson & Co. (1898?). This work answers common household questions for the homemaker. As such, it provides useful information regarding household servants, forms of address, dining protocol, and other daily customs. There is an excellent index.
 11. **Baedeker's London and Its Environs; Great Britain; Switzerland.** Leipsic: Karl Baedeker. These are the essential travel guidebooks of their time. Many public libraries have copies available. Unfortunately, copies from the 1880s or 1890s, while not scarce, have become quite expensive. They contain a wealth of information about canonical locations as well as much useful information about contemporary life (postal services, theaters, rail, buses, etc.). As might be expected, these are well-indexed volumes.
 12. **Dickens's Dictionary of London.** London: Charles Dickens & Evans (1890). Available for various years, this is a remarkable collection of information about theaters, merchants, hotels, and other aspects of daily life. A similar volume titled *Dickens' Dictionary of the Thames* (London: J. Smith 1894) provides like data about the venues along the river.
 13. **Beeton's British Gazetteer.** London: Ward, Lock & Co. (1870). This provides a short description of virtually every village, market town, and city in England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as valuable railway connection information.
 14. **Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.** Edited by E. Cobham Brewer. Philadelphia: Henry Altemus (1894). This invaluable source of information is available on the Internet as well at <<http://www.bartleby.com/81/>>.
 15. **Slang Dictionary; or, The Vulgar Words, Street Phrases, and "Fast" Expressions of High and Low Society.** London: John Camden Hotten (1865). This is primarily interesting as a *contemporary* slang dictionary. It falls far short of modern slang dictionaries but is an oft-cited source for the latter.
 16. **Anglo-American Dictionary.** Edited by George Clifford Whitworth. London: Keegan Paul, Trench & Co. (1885). This unique work provides an

apparently comprehensive glossary for the Victorian commercial or military traveler to India.

17. **Handy Reference Atlas of London and Suburbs.** Edinburgh: John Bartholomew & Co. (1908). This standard reference work is available for various dates. Indexed by street name.
18. **Walks in London.** By Augustus J. C. Hare. New York: George Routledge and Sons (1884). 2 vols. in one. A fine anecdotal view of London, used extensively by William Baring-Gould in preparing the *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. It is indexed by street and place name.
19. **The Police Code and General Manual of the Criminal Law.** By Col. Sir Howard Vincent. London: Francis Edwards and Limpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd. (1904). An excellent overview of British law, used as a handbook for constables. Arranged by name of crime.

GENERAL COMMENTARIES ON THE CANON

20. **A Sherlock Holmes Commentary.** By Martin Dakin. Newton Abbot, U.K.: David & Charles (1972). One of the great overall commentaries, carefully arranged by story, with an extensive index (including case references). This includes a complete chronology.
21. **Private Life of Sherlock Holmes.** By Vincent Starrett. New York: Macmillan Company (1933). Also, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1960) and New York: Pinnacle Books (1975). Another seminal work from the beginning of the “Golden Age.” This is actually a series of untitled essays and contains many gems of original thought. No index.
22. **Detecting Sherlock Holmes: The Problems of the Long Stories.** By Ian McQueen. Newton Abbot, U.K., London, and Vancouver: David & Charles (1974). Another excellent overall commentary, with an extensive index and table of case references.
23. **Holmes and Watson.** By June Thomson. London: Constable & Company Ltd. (1995). A fine fresh view of the Canon. Its greatest flaws are the lack of reference to other scholarship (although Thomson refers frequently to Dakin’s chronology) and the lack of an index, although the material is arranged in (her) chronological order.
24. **Sidelights on Holmes.** By John Hall. Ashcroft, BritishColumbia: Calabash Press (1998). A commentary in the style of Dakin, arranged by case. Hall makes little reference to other scholarship and presents his own often-iconoclastic views. Unfortunately, there is no index. Also, *The Abominable Wife and Other Unrecorded Cases of Mr. Sherlock Holmes* Ashcroft, BritishColumbia: Calabash Press (1998). Mr. Hall makes much out of very little data in this useful work.

25. **My Dear Holmes.** By Gavin Brend. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. (1951). Also, New York: Otto Penzler Books (1994). One of the great works of scholarship, perhaps the last of the “Golden Age.” No index.
26. **Sherlock Holmes: Fact or Fiction?** By T. S. Blakeney. London: John Murray (1932). Also, New York: Otto Penzler Books (1993). A seminal work issued almost simultaneously with H. W. Bell’s ground-breaking chronology. No index.
27. **On the Scent with Sherlock Holmes.** By Walter Shepherd. Bloomington, IN: Gaslight Publications (1987). An excellent work focused mainly on science in the Canon. Well-indexed.
28. **Elementary Methods of Sherlock Holmes.** By Brad Keefauver. New York: Magico Magazine (1987). Also, *Sherlock Holmes and the Ladies*. New York: Magico Magazine (1988). Excellent “modern” thinking about the Canon, by one of the Peoria School. No indices.
29. **Ms. Holmes of Baker Street: The Truth about Sherlock.** By Alan Bradley and William A. S. Sarjeant. Dubuque, IA: Gasogene Press, Ltd. (1989). This work has as its thesis that Sherlock Holmes was a woman. Putting aside that frivolity, it contains valuable observations and insights into the text, which in many cases suggest conclusions other than that of the authors. Well-indexed by case name.

COLLECTIONS OF ESSAYS ON THE CANON (SINGLE AUTHOR)

30. **Sherlockian Studies.** By Jay Finley Christ. New York: Magico Magazine (1986) (single vol.). Contains *Flashes by Fanlight*, *Gleanings by Gaslight*, *Soundings in the Saga*, *Sherlock’s Anniversaries*, and *Finch’s Final Fling*. Privately printed (1946–1963) (quite scarce, thus). These are newspaper columns on a variety of topics. Sadly, they are not indexed.
31. **Sherlock Holmes: Ten Literary Studies.** By Trevor H. Hall. New York: St. Martin’s Press (1969) (also in paperback). Also, *The Late Mr. Sherlock Holmes & Other Literary Studies* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. [1971]) and *Sherlock Holmes and His Creator* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. [1978]). Carefully researched and interesting studies of many canonical topics, with extensive indices and tables of case references.
32. **Baker Street By-Ways. A Book About Sherlock Holmes.** By James Holroyd. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. (1959). Also, New York: Otto Penzler Books (1994). A fine collection of essays by the dean of English Holmesians. No index.
33. **Studies in Sherlock Holmes.** By O. F. Grazebrook. Privately printed (ca. 1949) 7 vols. Extremely scarce. Also, New York: Magico Magazine (1981) (single vol.). These are not indexed but arranged by subject in separate

volumes. The most useful volumes are on “Royalty,” “Politics and Premiers,” and “The Author of the Case-Book.”

34. **Austin’s Sherlockian Studies.** By Bliss Austin. Privately printed (1953–1981) as *A Baker Street Christmas Stocking*; very scarce. Also, New York: Magico Magazine (1986) (single vol.). Unfortunately, no index.
35. **Montgomery’s Christmas Annuals.** By James Montgomery. Privately printed (1950–1955) (5 vols.). Very scarce. Also, New York: Magic Magazine (1983) (single vol.). These are not indexed but arranged by subject in separate volumes. Includes the first great work on Sherlockian illustrators.
36. **Simpson’s Sherlockian Studies.** By A. Carson Simpson. Philadelphia: Privately printed (1953–1961) (9 vols.). Very scarce. Also, New York: Magico Magazine (1982) (single volume). These are not indexed but arranged by subject in separate volumes. They focus primarily on numismatics, medals, stamps, the Great Hiatus, and a few other subjects.

SINGLE-AUTHOR WORKS ON SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

37. **The Game Is Afoot: A Travel Guide to the England of Sherlock Holmes.** By David L. Hammer. Bloomington, IN: Gaslight Publications (1983). Also, *For the Sake of the Game*. Dubuque, IA: Gasogene Press, Ltd. (1986); *To Play the Game*. Dubuque, IA: Gasogene Press, Ltd. (1991); *The Worth of the Game*. Dubuque, IA: Gasogene Press, Ltd. (1993); *A Dangerous Game*. Indianapolis, IN: Gasogene Books (1997). Highly individualistic travel diaries identifying canonical locations. Well-indexed, including case references.
38. **In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes.** By Michael Harrison. Newton Abbot, U.K.: David & Charles (1971). Also, *The London of Sherlock Holmes*. Newton Abbot, U.K.: David & Charles (1972) and *The World of Sherlock Holmes*. London: Frederick Muller Ltd. (1973). Also available in American editions. These are superb collections of essays on contemporary Victorian life, related to specific incidents in the Canon. Well-indexed, with case references.
39. **Meteorological Holmes.** By Donald Girard Jewell. Also, *A Few Hours to the Birds*; *Canonical Cats*; *The Botanical Holmes*; *The Herpetological Holmes*; *Butterflies and Blind Beetles*; *A Trout in the Milk*; *A Canonical Dog’s Life*; and *Horses of Different Colors*. (*The Sherlock Holmes Natural History Series*). Westminster, MD: Pinchin Lane Press (1991–1997). Excellent monographs on specific natural history topics; well-indexed and with extensive case references.
40. **Medical Casebook of Doctor Arthur Conan Doyle.** By Alvin E. Rodin and Jack D. Key. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, Inc.

(1984). An excellent study of medicine in the Canon (and in other works of ACD). Well-indexed and carefully annotated (with much use of non-Sherlockian periodicals), including case references.

41. **Sherlock Holmes and Music.** By Guy Warrack. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. (1947). Scarce. Also, New York: Magico Magazine (1984). The seminal book on the topic. Not indexed.
42. **Practical Handbook of Sherlockian Heraldry.** By Dr. Julian Wolff. New York: Privately printed (1955). Scarce. Also, New York: Magico Magazine (1983). The definitive work on the subject, with much interesting history. No index but arranged by family names.
43. **Sherlock Holmes: Rare Book Collector.** By Madeleine Stern. Rockville Centre, NY: Paulette Greene (1981). The work's thesis is that Holmes had a fine library of books, and Stern explores its likely contents. No index.
44. **In Bed with Sherlock Holmes: Sexual Elements in Arthur Conan Doyle's Stories of the Great Detective.** By Christopher Redmond. Toronto: Simon & Pierre (1984). A careful study of the entire Canon, with extensive reference to the Sherlockian literature and an excellent index including case references.

INDISPENSABLE SHERLOCKIAN REFERENCE TOOLS

45. **A Sherlock Holmes Handbook.** By Christopher Redmond. Toronto: Simon & Pierre (1993). An excellent quick reference to virtually everything relating to the Canon. Extensively indexed, including by case name.
46. **Encyclopedia Sherlockiana.** By Jack Tracy. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co. (1977). In a fine substitute for an actual contemporary *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Tracy has provided information on *every* conceivable canonical topic that would have been available to Holmes's contemporaries. This volume is a handy tool for checking story references (albeit far less complete than *The Canonical Compendium*, below). A CD-ROM version is available.
47. **Canonical Compendium.** By Stephen Clarkson. Ashcroft, British Columbia: Calabash Press (1999). Virtually a concordance to the Canon indexed by subject, and with page references to the five major editions of the Canon. More than 25 years in the making and still awesome.
48. **An Irregular Anglo-American Glossary of More or Less Unfamiliar Words, Terms and Phrases in the Sherlock Holmes Saga.** By S. Tupper Bigelow. 2nd ed. Shelburne, Ontario: Battered Silicon Dispatch-Box (1999). An excellent glossary for many unfamiliar words and phrases; sadly, although recently expanded, it still lacks case references.
49. **A Sherlock Holmes Dictionary.** By Kelvin Jones. New York: Magico Magazine (1988). Jones defines almost the same material as Bigelow (above)

but provides scholarly sources for his definitions and case references. An overlooked work that deserves recognition.

50. **Universal Sherlock Holmes.** By Ronald B. DeWaal. Shelburne, Ontario: Battered Silicon Dispatch-Box (1994) (5 vols). The absolutely indispensable guide to the periodical literature on the Canon, with an extensive index of authors, titles, subjects, actors, and “imposters.” Available on the Internet at <<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/ush/ush.html>> and on CD-ROM (the latter is incredibly useful).

I have not listed chronological works (see generally Peck, Andrew Jay, and Klinger, Leslie S., “*The Date Being-?*”: *A Compendium of Chronological Data*, a New York: Magico Magazine [1996] for an overview of the field) or the many fine multi-author collections of essays. It would be impossible to list all of the excellent periodicals published in the field; however, the newly released CD-ROM of the complete run of the BAKER STREET JOURNAL (1946–2000) is essential for any scholars’ library. Many other works that I treasure are listed in the bibliographies to my *Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* volumes.