

# **Silent Sherlock**

## Sherlock Holmes and the Silent Film Era

by

Howard Ostrom

### Part Eighteen (1922)

The year 1922 would see two major film occurrences in the Sherlockian film world. Eille Norwood and Stoll Films would continue pouring out films, this time a series of fifteen, known as 'The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes'. Yet, the biggest splash would belong to John Barrymore's "Sherlock Holmes", which featured a dream pairing of 'The Great Profile' and biggest film star, with the greatest profiler and literary star.

#### "The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"

**1922 - "Charles Augustus Milverton"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - "The Abbey Grange"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - "The Norwood Builder"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - "The Reigate Squires"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - "The Naval Treaty"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - "The Second Stain"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - "The Red Circle"**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Six Napoleons”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “Black Peter”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Bruce Parkington Plans”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Stockbroker’s Clerk”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Boscombe Valley Mystery”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Musgrave Ritual”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Golden Pince-Nez”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

**1922 - “The Greek Interpreter”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.).

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**1922 - “Sherlock Holmes”, or, “Moriarty”** (U.K.). John Barrymore (1882 - 1942) as Sherlock Holmes and Roland Young (1887 - 1953) as Dr. Watson. Goldwyn Pictures.



“Sherlock Holmes” - What can one say, other than the number one box office Sherlock Holmes movie of the silent film era.



# Across the Silversheet

The New Screen Plays In Review

By

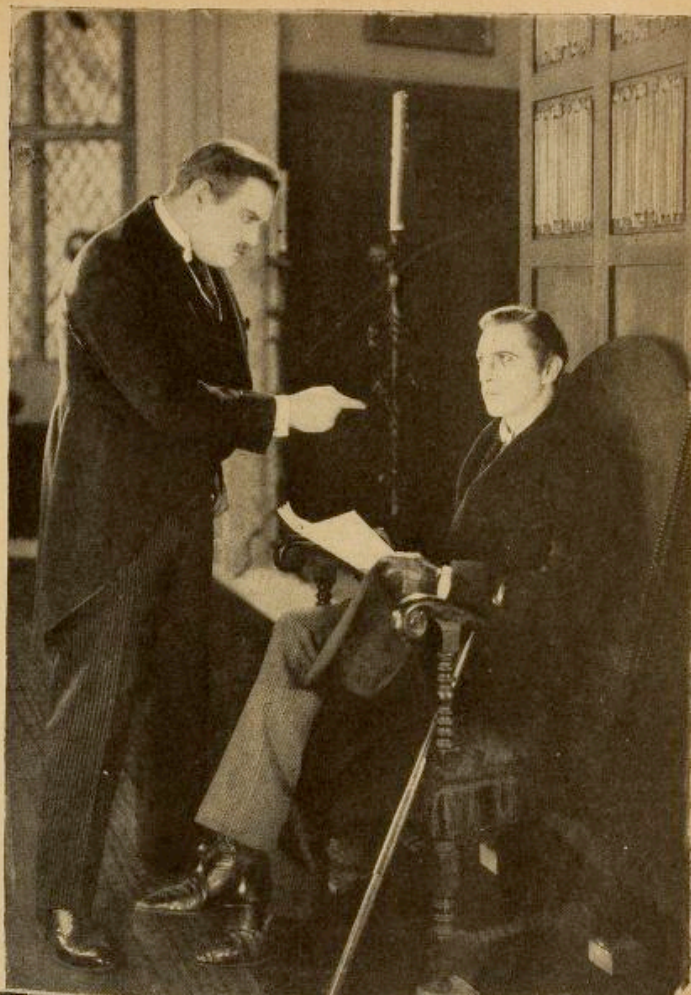
ADELE WHITELY FLETCHER

**B**ECAUSE an actor must have a definite personality, there are but a very few who are able to keep their own individuality subservient to the individuality of the character they are creating. John Barrymore, however, achieves this with the same success with which he achieves other things. So it was Sherlock Holmes which we enjoyed more than John Barrymore as Sherlock Holmes.

If we nurtured a belief in witchcraft we would believe that Barrymore transmitted the psychology of his characters to his audience by supernatural means. He sways his audience as the winds sway slender reeds— But his magic is that of the artist and of the craftsman. His technique is colored by the great imagination with which he endows his work. By a hundred and one subtleties he portrays that which others fail to capture even after going to great lengths in their desire to achieve it.

Even to those rare souls who have not read Conan Doyle's story of the great detective whose lightning deductions astonished the greatest minds of England, Sherlock Holmes is not a stranger. And in stepping from the covers of the novel to the screen, the character has lost no interest.

The production, possessing a very definite artistic quality, also is interspersed with sensational episodes which jog the senses. The



Above is John Barrymore in "Sherlock Holmes." This is, by far, the finest production of the past month, and, for all of that, one of the finest productions that has come to the screen this year. At the left is Constance Talmadge in "The Primitive Lover," a production which is an improvement on the recent offerings in which she appeared



thread of suspense is maintained at something of a tension thruout the story of how Holmes foils the fiendish ends of Moriarty. Moriarty is forced to seek his dwelling farther and farther under ground— first in cellars and then in sub-cellars in order to escape the persecution of Holmes.

The love interest, with Carol Dempster playing the girl Sherlock eventually marries, was the creation of the scenarist, for Conan Doyle did not bless his detective with an inamorata.



## Newspaper Opinions

### "Sherlock Holmes"—Capitol

**TIMES**—No photoplay in which John Barrymore appears can be wholly uninteresting. He is such an expressive pantomimist and so distinctly an individual that he is bound to vivify many of his scenes. Gustave von Seyffertitz is also a screen actor whose performance gives a definite impression. So the photoplay has its two points. But how does it stand as a photoplay, a unified and completed whole? \* \* \* How stands "Sherlock Holmes" as a dramatic, or, if you will, a theatrical, composition? And the answer is, it falls. It falls to pieces. Only its separate elements remain.

**MORNING TELEGRAPH**—"Very good, Watson!" Thus making it unanimous that "Sherlock Holmes" is one of the greatest film successes that Mr. Barrymore has ever made and a superlatively fine motion picture.

**AMERICAN**—Even with John Barrymore concentrating until his brow became as corrugated as an accordion, the great detective could not get his stuff across to the spectators, and the sub-titles had to be made nearly continuous to let us know what it was all about.

**N. Y. WORLD**—The great detective, Holmes, is as attractive in the picture as he was on paper. It is granted that Mr. Barrymore perhaps is the screen's most effective male player. \* \* \* There is a higher grade of acting in "Sherlock Holmes" than may be found in most of the other photoplays made in the last few months. Hedda Hopper, Roland Young, as Watson; William H. Powell, Louis Wolheim; Gustave von Seyffertitz, as Prof. Moriarty, and Margaret Kemp are among those seen in the cast.

**TRIBUNE**—"Sherlock Holmes" is interesting as a picture chiefly because of the cast and the exteriors. \* \* \* Albert Parker directed the picture and it was photographed in England, Switzerland and in America. It is one of the things that must not be missed.

Women occupy a great deal of time, thought and consideration, and it is not likely that Holmes would have been romantically inclined. His days were well filled. However, they had to do something about the fadeout and the love interest is not permitted to dominate at any time.

Gustave V. Seyffertitz plays Moriarty and his portrayal bears a resemblance to Barrymore's depraved Jekyll in "Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." As a matter of fact, several people thought that Barrymore was creating a dual rôle. Certainly the portrayal deserves praise and commendation. Seeing it, we stop to wonder why the Vitagraph officials permitted this actor to depart from their studios.

Many of the exteriors for "Sherlock Holmes" were filmed in England. There are several shots of extraordinary beauty—particularly one scene, which finds Holmes standing at twilight on London Bridge, the Parliament buildings misty in the distance. There were scenes of the Limehouse district, too, with the arched and curving byways and the huddled houses dripping in the fog.

"Sherlock Holmes" is, by far, the finest production of the past month and, for all of that, one of the finest productions which has come to the screen this year.

**HERALD**—It is Sherlock Holmes minus the hypodermic syringe. In fact, there is very little real characterization called for and the star has a very pleasant time with little to do in the way of impersonation except look Byronic. \* \* \* There is none of the delineation of the eccentric side of the character, except that Barrymore certainly looks a bit extravagant when he runs. \* \* \* The picture has some nicely photographed scenes, and no doubt will be tremendously popular.

**SUN**—It is a straightaway story of adventure, with little space devoted to deduction, and while it makes a somewhat laggard start it comes along with such a rush in the last couple of reels that the spectator is glad the pace wasn't maintained throughout for fear of making him dizzy.

**GLOBE**—Of course, the story is one of action and does not allow for much emotional acting. But Barrymore has succeeded in making Holmes a distinct and fascinating personality. There is probably no need to mention in any detail the refinement and technical perfection of his acting, for that is always expected of him. He is supported by a remarkably able company. \* \* \*

**TELEGRAM**—The play moves swiftly. \* \* \* Al Parker proves himself a director of action—a master of suspense and quick-moving situations. Barrymore proves himself a master of all situations. Never for a moment does his clean-cut, precise movements falter. Never for a moment is there a doubt in the mind of the audience that he will succeed in turning the trick in his favor.

**MAIL**—In fact, this Sherlock of the screen is given practically no opportunity to demonstrate those marvels of deductive power which have made him the most widely known of all fictional detectives. He is rather an energetic, semi-romantic figure, who faithfully clings to his one great purpose of life, that of ridding the world of one of its worst criminals. \* \* \*

But the chief trouble with the film is that, despite Mr. Barrymore and his co-workers, it is dull and, as a whole, uninteresting.

**EVENING WORLD**—If you like Sherlock Holmes—and who doesn't?—you'll like John Barrymore in his characterization of the famous Conan Doyle hero in the film of that name now unreeled at the Capitol.

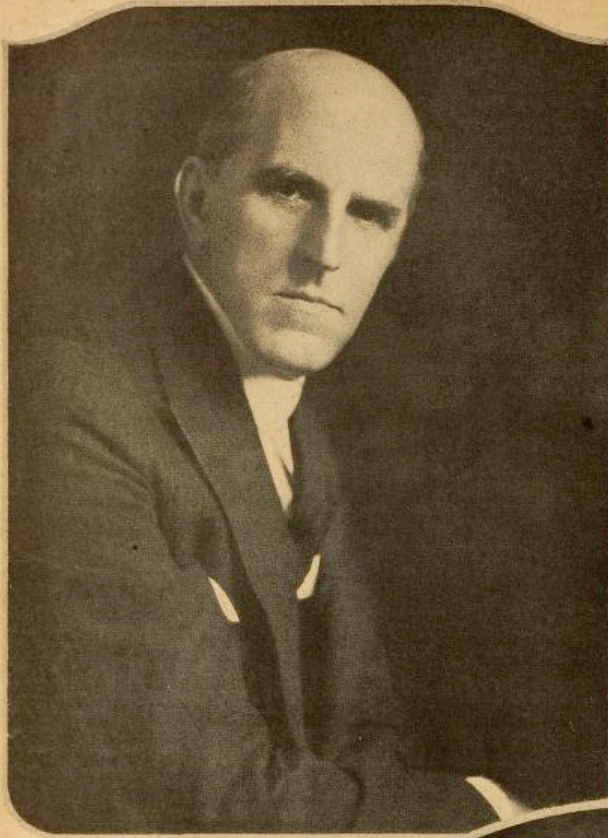
**EVENING JOURNAL**—Sherlock Holmes is the most ambitious attempt of the kind thus far made. The scenario is an abstract of Doyle's best known stories, with all the important characters active, including Professor Moriarty, the arch-criminal. The film was made in London and Switzerland, and the atmosphere of the stories is preserved. The cast is exceptionally expensive.

## Rave Reviews

Full Column of first day reviews of John Barrymore's "Sherlock Holmes"<sup>1</sup>

You can view a few minutes of John Barrymore as Sherlock Holmes at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLKeWcC1xyc&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>1</sup> "The Film Daily" (Volume 19-20) Jan - Jun 1922 Pg. 4 - May 9



They Thought  
He Was  
John  
Barrymore

Scores of people thought John Barrymore played a dual rôle in "Sherlock Holmes." They insisted he played not only Sherlock Holmes, but Moriarty also. This was great tribute for the work of Gustav V. Seyffertitz, who actually created the rôle of Moriarty. And it is true that his Moriarty was not unlike Barrymore's Hyde in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Mr. Seyffertitz enjoyed marked success on the stage, as stage director for Maude Adams and Charles Frohman. "The Little Minister" and "Chanticleer" numbered among his efforts. On the screen he has directed Lila Lee and Alice Calhoun. However, when people think his work is the work of John Barrymore, we believe it behooves Mr. Seyffertitz to give his efforts to actual portrayals



See Barrymore meet Moriarty at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBXmxqYcIOQ>



# "Sherlock Holmes" Another S. R. O. Picture

John Barrymore in  
"SHERLOCK HOLMES"

DIRECTOR ..... Albert Parker  
BASED ON ..... William Gillette's stage play and  
founded on the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle stories  
SCENARIO BY ..... Earle Brown and Marion Fairfax  
CAMERAMAN ..... J. Roy Hunt  
AS A WHOLE ..... A painstaking production and  
apparently a picture with a great deal of popular  
appeal

STORY ..... All the familiar Doyle characters com-  
bined in a story that is interesting but improb-  
able and incongruous at times

DIRECTION ..... Takes a little time to get to the  
action, but otherwise good; some outstanding  
touches and a number of interesting exteriors

PHOTOGRAPHY ..... Good

LIGHTINGS ..... Sometimes too dark on interiors

STAR ..... Gives his usual finished performance; is  
not so handsome in this; uses a little too much  
precision at times

SUPPORT ..... A strong supporting cast in the main  
EXTERIORS ..... Views in England and Switzer-  
land; splendid

INTERIORS ..... All right

DETAIL ..... Occasionally too much

CHARACTER OF STORY ..... Detective, after ex-  
haustive efforts, finally outwits arch criminal  
and marries girl whose life he saves

LENGTH OF PRODUCTION ..... 8,156 feet

John Barrymore's latest picture looks to be about  
one of the most ambitious productions seen of late,  
and if you are to judge its popularity from the throngs  
that sought admission to the showing on the second  
night of the run, it seems destined to prove a big num-  
ber. At the Capitol's ten o'clock showing on Monday  
night they were still standing a couple of rows deep.

"Sherlock Holmes" has angles of appeal which  
should make it a good drawing card. In the first place

there is the performance of Barrymore to look forward  
to and in view of some of his previous characterizations  
folks are certain to be interested in observing his por-  
trayal of Conan Doyle's famous detective. The star's  
work is distinguished by his usual skill and the ability  
to play any part convincingly. He is not given to any  
emotional acting in this but he makes the shrewd,  
crafty Holmes everything that Doyle intended him to  
be. Barrymore does not photograph as well this time  
nor are there many of his customary "handsome" pro-  
file shots.

A capable and worthy supporting cast is headed by  
Gustave von Seyffertitz as Moriarity, the famed arch-  
criminal. von Seyffertitz is excellent in a character  
not unlike Barrymore's own Dr. Hyde. Carol Demp-  
ster, a Griffith player, is Alice Faulkner. She is suit-  
able in the part but makes nowhere near the pleasing  
impression which she scored in "Dream Street." Ev-  
eryone else does very good work but the list is too  
long to mention the players individually.

Director Parker has plainly endeavored to make the  
production a very worthy work and so far as bring-  
ing the greatest detective character in fiction to life  
is concerned he has succeeded, but the production nev-  
ertheless has its faults. It is too long and it is not  
easy to follow the story. In an effort to clarify matters  
numerous long titles are used that often confuse more  
than they explain. The result is a "talky" picture and  
if you happen in after the first half reel you are about  
lost because it is not the kind of a story that you can  
pick up readily. The adventures of the detective fur-  
nish plenty of thrills and excitement for those who like  
it regardless of the improbabilities. The exteriors are  
splendid and there are numerous familiar scenes that  
are very interesting.

Story: Much too complicated to relate in detail,  
but deals with Holmes' efforts and final success in cap-  
turing the notorious Professor Moriarity, arch-crim-  
inal.

## Apparently a Fine Box Office Number With Title and Star to Draw

### Box Office Analysis for the Exhibitor

"Sherlock Holmes" will undoubtedly prove a big  
one as far as the box office is concerned. Sir Arthur  
Conan Doyle's famous character needs no advertising  
since the public is already thoroughly familiar with  
the adventures of fiction's greatest detective and the  
Holmes stories have met with almost universal ap-  
proval so that the drawing power of the title seems  
certain. Added to this you have the name of John  
Barrymore to help exploit it to an even greater extent.

It would be well to make sure of a booking as soon

as a releasing arrangement is announced. As yet none  
has been decided upon. You have a good start in the  
title and name of the star, so it is up to you to see that  
it gets over in a satisfactory way. It would not be  
unwise either to give Doyle's name a good deal of  
prominence in view of the many recent newspaper  
notices he has received and the fact that he is in this  
country at present. At any rate use your best effort  
to make it pay, because it has the possibilities.

Standing Room Only  
Box Office Numbers and Top Star

A rundown on plot and all aspects of John Barrymore's "Sherlock Holmes" is  
above.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "The Film Daily" (Volume 19-20) Jan - Jun 1922 May 14 Pg. 2

Reminder, you can view a few minutes of John Barrymore as Sherlock Holmes at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLKeWcC1xyc&feature=youtu.be>

**1922 - “The Affected Detective”**, Cecil Mannering as a famous sleuth who liked cocaine. Revue Films (U.K.).

“The Affected Detective” - A detective under the influence of cocaine imagines he is tracking down criminals in the far away Orient.

**1922 - “Jazz Hounds”**, Lawrence Chenault, the man in the Sherlockian garb. Reol Productions.

“Both censorship records and lobby cards for the film suggest that Reol's two-reel comedy ‘The Jazz Hounds’ borrowed liberally from the Ebony Film



Corporation's popular (1918) Black Sherlock Holmes character. The Chicago Board of Censors' synopsis describes the plot of 'The Jazz Hounds' as 'Fake detective's episodes'. One lobby card depicts a lighter-skinned Black man in a deerstalker cap and matching cape interrogating two 'zip coon' characters, who consume fried chicken with gusto in another still.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Petersen, Christina -Film History | July 1, 2008 | “The 'Reol' story: race authorship and consciousness in Robert Levy's Reol Productions, 1921-1926”

**1922 - “Camillo Emulo di Sherlock Holmes”, or “Camillo Emulated Sherlock Holmes”.** Alberto Albertini (1898 - 1957) as Camillo? Caesar Films (Italy).

End of Part Eighteen  
(1923 - 1924) Begins in Part Nineteen



