

Silent Sherlock Sherlock Holmes and the Silent Film Era

by

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Part Fourteen (1916 Continues)

Part thirteen of the series spent a lot of time on William Gillette's film "Sherlock Holmes", and rightfully so, but now for my - oh, and by the way, we will give you the rest of Sherlock Holmes in silent films for the year 1916 as promised. This includes H. A. Saintsbury in "The Valley of Fear", and Douglas Fairbanks in "The Mystery of the Leaping Fish", a Holmes you will have to see to believe.

1916 - "The Valley of Fear" - H. A. Saintsbury (1869 - 1939) as Sherlock Holmes and Arthur M. Cullin as Dr. Watson. Samuelson Film Mfg. (U.K.)



"The Valley of Fear" - Comments on the Films - "Sherlock Holmes again makes his appearance in the latest A. Conan Doyle's detective story, "The Valley of Fear." The scenes are laid in a mining district of the United States and carried across the waters to London. The film, unlike the story, is full of action, mystery and deductions, and grips the audience from the moment it flashed on the screen to finish. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author, displayed the keenest interest in the writing of the scenario, and personally gave his

attention to the cast and brought forth the Sherlock Holmes as he pictures and understands him to be. This picture is sold on a state right basis and is handled exclusively by John W. Heaney, 1480 Broadway, Longacre Building, New York City."¹

488 THE MOVING PICTURE WORLD January 27, 1917



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SHERLOCK HOLMES
solves
the International Mystery

The latest Sherlock Holmes
detective story a tale of two
Continents written by SIR
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE,
the dean of mystery stories.

**The
Valley of Fear**

is a Six Part film story full of punch
and action and suspense keeping an
audience keyed up to the keenest point
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By the time "The Valley of Fear" was made, Harry Arthur Saintsbury had played Holmes more than a thousand times on stage. His interpretation of Holmes was notably restrained and made a powerful impression on the young Charlie Chaplin, who wrote of Saintsbury in 1964, "Mr. H. A. Saintsbury, who played Holmes on tour, was a living replica of the illustrations in The Strand Magazine. He had a long sensitive face and an inspired forehead. Of all those who played Holmes, he was considered the best, even better than William Gillette, the original Holmes and author of the play."²

¹ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 31 Jan. - Mar. 1917 pg. 548

² Charlie Chaplin, "My Autobiography" - 1964, pg. 81

Next up good Doctor, a couple of fish stories, or Fishlock Holmes!

1916 - "Robbing The Fishes" - Raymond McKee (1892 - 1984) as Sherlock Woof. Edison Films.



"Robbing The Fishes" - Stories of the Films - Cast: Sherlock Woof (Raymond McKee) - (plot summary -quickie) - The Fish family, are having a large wedding with lots of presents, and have read about a butler stealing someones wedding gifts, so they hire detective Sherlock Woof to keep an eye on the butler. After the wedding all the gifts, the butler and the detective are gone. Turns out the detective was the thief and the butler did the catching.³

1916 - "The Mystery of the Leaping Fish" - Douglas Fairbanks Sr. (1883 - 1939) as Coke Ennyday/Sherlock Holmes. Vitagraph Film Co.



³ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 28 Apr. - Jun. 1916 pg. 1388

"The Mystery of the Leaping Fish" is a short film starring Douglas Fairbanks and Bessie Love. In this unusually broad comedy for Fairbanks, the acrobatic leading man plays 'Coke Ennyday,' a cocaine-shooting detective parody of Sherlock Holmes given to injecting himself with cocaine from a bandolier of syringes worn across his chest and liberally helping himself to the contents of a hatbox-sized round container of white powder labeled 'COCAINE' on his desk. The movie, written by D.W. Griffith, Tod Browning, and Anita Loos, displays a surreally lighthearted attitude toward cocaine and opium. Fairbanks otherwise lampoons Sherlock Holmes with checkered detective hat, coat, and even car, along with the aforementioned propensity for injecting cocaine whenever he feels momentarily down, then laughing with delight. In addition to observing visitors at his door on what appears to be a closed-circuit television referred to in the title cards as his "scientific periscope," a clock-like sign on the wall reminds him to choose between 'EATS, DRINKS, SLEEPS, and DOPE.'"⁴

"Fairbanks hated the film and reportedly wanted to have it withdrawn from circulation."⁵

You MUST watch 'The Mystery of the Leaping Fish' at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fprVONwmYnc>

1916 - "The Great Detective" - Lloyd V. Hamilton (1891 - 1935) as Ham, a vigilant Sherlock, and Bud Duncan (1883 - 1960) as Bud, the Watson who takes care of his 999 disguises. Kalem Films.



⁴ Ivan Smirnov <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fprVONwmYnc>

⁵ Vance, Jeffrey (2008). Cushman, Robert, ed. "Douglas Fairbanks". U of Ca. Press. p. 36.

"The Great Detective" - Kalem's Funmakers Busy - "Ham makes a vigilant Sherlock and Bud the Watson who takes care of his 999 disguises. To secure many novelty effects trick work was called into strong play in this one-reeler. Ellen Godsay and A. Edmondson are others in the cast of 'The Great Detective', which is scheduled for release on July 18th."⁶

1916 - "Otto The Sleuth" - Davy Don (1867 - 1949) as Otto, the German sleuth. Lubin Films.

"Otto The Sleuth" - Comments on the Films - "It is doubtful if Sherlock Holmes would approve of some of Otto's deductions while on the trail of a crime, but, as played by D. L. Don, the German sleuth is good for a lot of laughs. For a burlesque comedian, Mr. Don i.e. remarkably easy and restrained in his method. The plot of this one-reel farce has to do with the theft of a canary."⁷

1916 - "Peaches and Ponies" - Henry Murdoch (1891 - 19??) as Gluefoot Gaspar, a near-Sherlock. Kalem Films.

"Peaches and Ponies" - Comments on the Films - ..."The story finds Ivy a troubled bride with a hubby who spends most of his time over the racing charts and the past performances of Molly S., Gay Widow, and such steeds. When Ivy's suspicions are aroused over these supposed home-breakers she engages a near-Sherlock, played in ludicrous fashion, by Henry Murdoch, with disastrous results."⁸

"Peaches and Ponies" - Stories of the Films - The Cast: Bess (Ivory Close); Ray (Arthur Albertson); Gluefoot Gaspar (Henry Murdoch); Henry Sutton (Willie McKey); Dollie Cole (Frances Nemoyer). Producer, Robert Ellis. "For a recent bridegroom Ray gives all too much money to the race track, to the neglect of Bess. To make matters worse, Bess has discovered his notebook with mysterious references to Fanny S., Grass Widow, Some Chicken, and other supposed charmers, who are in reality race track favorites. Beth engages the services of Gluefoot Gaspar, who as a Sherlock is a scream. But Gaspar gets on the job and trails Ray to a fashionable cabaret, where he dines with Dolly. Gluefoot hustles Bess around to see the evidence and there is a whirl of excitement that brings trouble and laughs in quick succession until explanations bring out the fact that Dolly is an out-of-town buyer whom

⁶ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep. 1916 pg. n727

⁷ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep 1916 pg. 807

⁸ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep 1916 pg. 1147

Ray had been delegated to entertain, and also the harmlessness of the notebook entries"⁹

1916 - "A Villainous Villain" - Huey Mack (1884 - 1927) as Sherlock Oomph. Vitagraph Films.

"A Villainous Villain" - Stories of the Films - The cast: Sherlock Oomph (Huey Mack); Ida Dukkets (Patsy Deforest); The Villain (Harry Hammill); Old Man Dukkets (William Shea); Gentleman Joe (Ed Dunn). Authors Lawrence Semon and Graham Baker. Produced by Graham Baker.

"The master crook steals the sweetheart of Sherlock, a great detective. Sherlock undertakes to recover her. The cooks make futile attempts on his life and then to lure him to their den, they drag the girl at the end of a rope tied to an automobile. Sherlock chases it, captures the girl, and while she is trying to untie the rope, he holds the auto by strength. The auto and he pull and the rope parts in the middle. Sherlock falls over while the auto plunges over the end of a pier. It sinks to the bottom where the crooks strip the tires off, and, using them as life preservers, come to the top, just as the master crook pushes the girl into the water. Sherlock blows his police whistle and the motorboat cops start up. Sherlock, in casting off the rope that ties the boat to the dock, gets tangled in it and is dragged through the water after the boat. The crooks and the girl flee in a rowboat. The motorboat cuts through the frail craft, throwing the crooks and the girl into the water. As Sherlock flies by at the end of his rope, he grabs the girl and they climb into the motorboat and are saved. They leave the crooks struggling in the water."¹⁰

"A Villainous Villain" - Comments on the Films - "Rapid-fire action and the work of Huey Mack and Patsy Deforest make this one-reel farce comedy a laugh producer. Thrills and humor are furnished when an automobile filled with crooks drives off a dock. The story is burlesque on the time-honored melodramatic plot in which the daughter of a banker is kidnapped by the villainous villain. The denouncement comes when she is rescued from the water by Sherlock Oomph, as he trails on a rope behind a motorboat."¹¹

⁹ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep. 1916 pg. 1147

¹⁰ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep. 1916 pg. 1875

¹¹ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep. 1916 pg. 1992

1916 - "Through the Wall" - Vitagraph Films.

"Through the Wall" - Manufacturer's Advanced Notes - "Through the Wall" is one of the finest mystery pictures Vitagraph has ever produced. For genuine thrills and subtle detective work it equals Sherlock Holmes at his best."¹²



Spokes from the Hub by Marion Howard - Mentions - "... "Through the Wall" one of the best detective mystery plays offered us -- better even than Sherlock Holmes (some of our lawyers say). The wreck scene in mid-ocean was some thriller."¹³

1916 - "Adventures of Mr. Nobody Holmes" - Animated short. Gregory LaCava, (U.S.)

1916 - "The Waif" - Matty Roubert (1907 - 1973) as the waif. Aurora Film Co.



¹² "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 30 Oct. - Dec. 1916 pg. 97

¹³ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 30 Oct. - Dec. 1916 pg. 1105

Film is listed in "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at The Cinema" by Scott Allen Nollen , as a parody of Sherlock Holmes film. Seems to be about a waif in N.Y.C.? Perhaps I'm missing something here? Nice article on boy star Matty Roubert is here: <http://www.b-westerns.com/henchie18.htm>

To finish up the year 1916, we will give a mention to three German silent films, and once again our old friend Alwin Neuss is a key player in two of them.

1916 - "Sherlock Holmes auf Urlaub" or, "Sherlock Holmes on Holiday" or, "Sherlock Holmes on Leave" - Alwin Neuss as Sherlock



Holmes. Directed by Karl Schoenfeld (Germany).

1916 - "Sherlock Holmes auf Urlaub II" or, "Der Wärfwolf" - or, "The Werewolf" or, "Sherlock Holmes and the Midnight Meeting"- Alwin Neuss as Sherlock Holmes. Directed by Karl Schoenfeld (Germany).

1916 - "Die Hand", or "The Hand" - Actors unknown. Eiko-Films (Germany).

End of Part Fourteen
(1917 - 1920) Begins in Part Fifteen

