

Silent Sherlock
Sherlock Holmes and the Silent Film Era

by

Howard Ostrom

Part Nine (1913 Continued)

Ladies first as we finish up the year 1913 for Sherlock Holmes silent films. Two famous silent film actresses, Bliss Milford and Pearl White, have joined in on the fun.

1913 - "The Amateur Sleuth" - Pearl White, as Herlock Sholmes. Guamont.

1913 - "Homlock Shermes" - Pearl White, as Pearl the girl detective. Crystal Film Co.



"Homlock Shermes" - "Pearl, the girl detective, is at home chafing with inactivity and the want of something to do. She decides to go out for a walk in the hope that something in the way of an adventure may come her way. Fred Hanley, a young man, has become a confirmed drunkard. A friend of his brings a doctor to visit Hanley. Hanley

becomes excited during their visit and frightens them nearly unto death by shooting at them with a revolver. They leave in haste, but decide to lock Hanley in his room. This they do, leaving a servant to watch the door. Hanley, crazed for want of drink, writes a note that he is wrongfully imprisoned, and offers \$5,000 reward for anyone who liberates him. This he throws out the window, just as Pearl is passing the house. She picks it up, reads it and realizes that her quest for an adventure has borne fruit. She immediately goes home and disguises as a boy. Coming back, she applies for a job and the woman downstairs employs her and puts the supposed boy to work. Pearl has a hard time of it, peeling potatoes and scrubbing floors, but with never a chance to liberate the unfortunate, supposed prisoner. Later, however, she is caught upstairs listening at the door by the servant, and is kicked downstairs. The woman pulls her ears for leaving the kitchen, and all in all, Pearl is treated exactly how a real detective should not be. However, at last, Pearl succeeds in gaining access to the room and is fondly dreaming of the five thousand dollar reward and her noble work and bravery, when Hanley's friends enter and explain. Pearl appreciates that she has been stung and beats a hasty retreat, resolving to detect in a more profitable way in the hereafter."¹

1913 - "The Sherlock Holmes Girl" - Bliss Milford, as Sally the Sherlock Holmes girl. Edison Film Co.



¹ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 17 July - Sep. 1913

"The Sherlock Holmes Girl" - "Sally was the maid-of-all-work at the Palace Hotel, Jonesville. Sally's rise to fame was occasioned solely because some absent-minded guest had left a book behind him, when he departed from the somewhat limited splendors of the Palace hotel. The book was a treatise on the ancient and gentle art of detecting. Filled with a desperate zeal to distinguish herself, Sally decided to 'shadow' the very next guest who arrived in the hotel. The first guest who arrived after Sally's decision was plainly a suspicious character. To begin with, he was quietly dressed and perfectly respectable in appearance. So Sally 'shadowed' the stranger in the most approved fashion. When he locked the door to his room she looked over the transom. Sure enough he took some jewels out of his suitcase. Sally instantly summoned the police. Entering the room to keep the man under closer surveillance, she accidentally pointed a fan, shaped like a pistol at him. Instantly his hands shot above his head. The funny part of it all was he really was the thief. Sally pocketed the reward and departed."²

1913 - "The Master Crook" - Arthur Finn as the master crook, a Sherlock Holmes criminal style. British & Colonial Kinematograph Co. (U.K.)

A crook returns stolen gems after a blind girl frees him when a gang tie him upside-down in a sewer.

"The Master Crook" - "The Master Crook is not an ordinary criminal, nor is this an ordinary crime story. Like Sherlock Holmes, the Master Crook is a character apart. ..." ³

We will finish the year 1913 with an assortment of silent efforts from France and Italy.

1913 - "One on Tooty" - Unknown female actress as Shamlock Bones. Eclair Film Co. (France).

"One For Tooty" - Tooty would rather read detective stories than eat...Her father and brother devise a scheme to cure her of her dime store novel habit by appearing as criminals...Tooty, dressed in her complete Shamlock Bones outfit, follows the suspicious men to a saloon... Shamlock Tooty summons

² "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 19 Jan. - March 1914 pg. 17

³ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 18 Oct. - Dec. 1913 pg. 1607

the police and bursts into the criminal lair... she grabs the loot bag...The only thing in the loot bag is a cook book. The father and brother remove their disguises and proceed to tell Tooty the only mystery she needs to learn how to solve is the mystery of making eatable ham and eggs.⁴

1913 - "L'uomo misterioso" or, "The Mysterious Man" - Augusto Mastripietri as Robert Marsh, Sherlock Holmes type detective. Cines Kleine Co. (Italy)

"The Mysterious Man" - "...The story smacks of Sherlock Holmes type, and the mystery is well preserved till the final scene. The detective impresses one as being very pompous and self important 'These are the marks of a small, well-shaped shoe'.... seeing that.... in the shrubbery assisted in no way, whatever in the apprehension of the criminal. Nor does the fact that the detective persists in smoking a briar pipe in and out of season.... he introduces himself to the commissioner of police and puffs smoke into his face during the conversation.....Helen's old sweetheart, Robert Marsh, who is in the detective business, arrives and immediately plans to capture the assassin and blackmailerthe mysterious man turning out to be Helen's father, Professor Mortimer."⁵

1913 - "The Runaway Uncle" - Actors unknown. Eclair Film Co. (France).

"The Runaway Uncle" - Comments on the film column - "A rather amusing farce comedy, in which three Sherlock Holmes detectives trail Uncle William, who has runaway and married. They discover him at the reception. The plot is eccentric rather than funny."⁶

1913 - "Più forte che Sherlock Holmes" or, "Stronger Than Sherlock Holmes" - Domenico Gambino as Salterelli. Itala Film Co. (Italy)

1913 - "Plus fort que Sherlock Holmes" - Georges Vinter as Nick Winter. Pathé Frères Film Co. (France) (same as above prob.)

1913 - "Fricot emulo di Sherlock Holmes" or, "Fricot emulo de Charley Combs" - Ernesto Vase as Fricot. Ambrosio Film Co. (Italy)

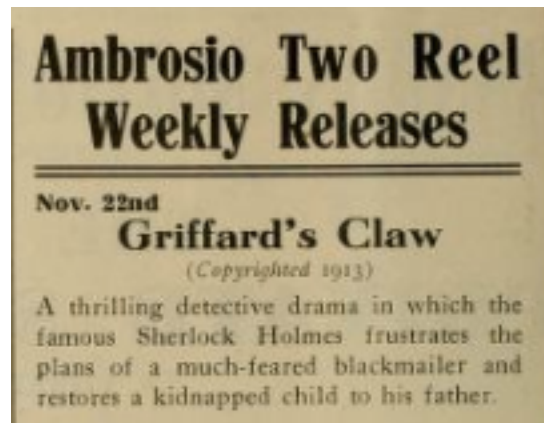
⁴ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 18 Oct. - Dec. 1913 pg. 912.

⁵ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 17 Jul. - Sep. 1913 pg. 684

⁶ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 17 Jul. - Sep. 1913 pg. 962

1913 - "Tweedledum and The Necklace" (listed as year 1911 in some sources) - Actors unknown. Ambrosio Film Co. (Italy)

There's the ultimate cross-over :: Tweedledum and Sherlock Holmes!



1913 - "Griffard's Claw" or, "Gli artigli di Griffard" or, "In The Grip of The Eagle's Claw"- Actors unknown. Ambrosio Film Co. (Italy)

"Griffard's Claw" - Plot summary column - "Mr. Delmion, a wealthy manufacturer, receives a note from the much feared Griffard that unless a considerable amount of money be deposited at the Cat's bridge, his little son, Mario, would be kidnapped. Much disturbed he appeals to Sherlock Holmes, a well known detective, for assistance, whereupon four guards are immediately stationed to protect his home. His two servants, with a view to derive a benefit for themselves, decide to become accomplices of Griffard, and with the aid of drink and opium they succeed in stupefying the two guards watching the child's room, and also Mr. Delmion. Now that all is safe little Mario is put into a valise and thrown from the window to Griffard's men, who have overcome the other two detectives outside the house. The next morning Sherlock Holmes gets a disconcerting note from Griffard and immediately goes to his clients house where he finds all the inmates under the influence of the drug. The treacherous servants, wishing to avoid avert suspicion, also have inhaled the opium. Although an immediate alarm is made no trace can be found of the child or his kidnappers. Some time later the suspicions of the guards are aroused by a beggar slinking around the house. Upon searching him at the detective's office a note intended for the

servants is found concealed in his clothes. Sherlock Holmes, assuming the beggar's disguise, meets the unsuspecting servants and takes them by surprise. In the meantime little Mario has been taken to a new hiding place. Seeking a means of deliverance he writes a note, which he puts into the role given him for dinner, and throws it out the window. Joseph, a young and hungry shepherd lad passing along, gratefully picks up the bread and discovers the message. Giving it to his father they immediately inform Mr. Delmion, who starts out in an automobile with a search party to the designated den. Little Mario's jailer, seeing them advancing, grabs the child and escapes with him. They follow his footprints but are soon without any guidance. The nimble witted detective, however, seeing an airplane leisurely flying around beckons to it. Entering the machine and with powerful telescope he explores the ground and soon discovers the jailer. Descending, he enters the deserted hut in which he has taken refuge, and the kidnapper is soon rendered powerless, while little Mario finds protection in his father's protecting arms."⁷

End of Part Nine
1914 Starts in Part Ten

⁷ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 18 Oct. - Dec. 1913 pg. 922