



# The Standard Doyle Company: Christopher Morley on Sherlock Holmes

*Steven Rothman*

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The cult of Sherlock Holmes and its organizational centerpiece, The Baker Street Irregulars, were products of the fertile mind of Christopher Morley (1890-1957), one of the most versatile and prolific writers of the first half of the twentieth century. Novelist, essayist, columnist, Book-of-the-Month Club judge, poet, panelist, and promoter, Morley was an avid exponent of the literature he loved. Few writers were closer to his heart than Arthur Conan Doyle, whose tales of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were still being penned during Morley's boyhood. This collection is a virtual anthology of Morley's many styles. In addition to old favorites like *In Memoriam Sherlock Holmes*, the preface to the Doubleday edition of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* published in 1930 and probably the most widely read Sherlockian essay of them all, here are previously unpublished or never-before-collected essays, poems, short stories, and even a play. Excerpts from the fifteen years of Morley's columns in the *Saturday Review of Literature* and a decade of his *Clinical Notes by a Resident Patient in the Baker Street Journal* (currently published by Fordham University Press) cover every aspect of Holmes's world - from dressing gowns to Turkish baths, from beekeeping to the Bin 221B Baker Street. As Morley put it in his little-known reader for high-school students, *Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, A Textbook of Friendship*, The beginning reader of Sherlock Holmes concerns himself with little more than attentive enjoyment, but there is a post-graduate school as well. There is a special and superior pleasure in reading anything so much more carefully than its author ever did. The Standard Doyle Company - Morley's punning title for the Baker Street Irregulars - is an advanced syllabus for the lover of Sherlockian literature and lore.

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