

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2018-5-5)

Steward's note: This is the first toast given at the Speckled Band of Boston by a woman.

The Baker Street Irregulars
The Speckled Band of Boston
May 4, 2018
Emily Miranker

Appearances can be deceiving. As Sherlock Holmes wisely tells Watson, “You see everything, but you fail to reason from what you see.” Upon first glance the street urchins, mudlarks, waifs, and ragamuffins of the so-called Baker Street Division of the detective police force are not much to look at. Indeed, Watson’s first impression of them is of a group of “dirty little scoundrels.”

But what Sherlockian reasoning tells us; is that these youngsters are very well placed to be London investigators. By dint of their very disreputable appearance — and yes, the sad fact of the sheer numbers of children wandering the city streets — they go unremarked upon by all and sundry. They are as much a part of the scenery of the marvelous and monstrous place that is Victorian London as the hansom cabs, the thick fog, or the chimes of Big Ben. Dismissed by society at large Holmes harnessed their ability “go everywhere, see everything, overhear every one.”

Scotland Yard has its officers, that Napoleon of crime Moriarty had his army of underworld lackeys, and Sherlock Holmes has his network of urban agents: the Baker Street Irregulars. Like Holmes we are not fooled by their so-called insignificant and unsavory appearance, like Holmes we know they are singular and worthy; so I ask you now to raise your glasses to the Baker Street Irregulars.