



I only quote
this as a
trivial
example of
observation
and
inference.

Adventure I -- A Study in Scarlet

1. "By a man's finger-nails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boots, by his trouser-knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt-cuff — By each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed."
2. "From a drop of water, a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. So, all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a link of it."
3. "His Ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge."
4. "How are you? You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."
5. "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skillful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget



something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."

6. "I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what it is."
7. "In solving a problem of this sort, the grand thing is to be able to reason backwards. That is a very useful accomplishment, and a very easy one, but people do not practise it much. In the every-day affairs of life it is more useful to reason forwards, and so the other comes to be neglected. There are fifty who can reason synthetically for one who can reason analytically."
8. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."
9. "It is a mistake to confound strangeness with mystery. The most commonplace crime is often the most mysterious because it presents no new or special features from which deductions may be drawn."
10. "It was easier to know it than to explain why I know it. If you were asked to prove that two and two made four, you might find some difficulty, and yet you are quite sure of the fact."
11. "Like all other arts, the science of deduction and analysis is one which can only be acquired by long and patient study, nor is life long enough to allow any mortal to attain the highest possible perfection in it. Before turning to those moral and mental aspects of the matter which present the greatest difficulties, let the inquirer begin by mastering more elementary problems. Let him, on meeting a fellow-mortal, learn at a glance to distinguish the history of man, and the trade or profession to which he belongs. Puerile as such an exercise may seem, it sharpens the faculties of observation, and teaches one where to look and what to look for."
12. "No man burdens his mind with small matters unless he has some very good reason for doing so."
13. "One's ideas must be as broad as Nature if they are to interpret Nature"

14. "Political assassins are only too glad to do their work and to fly.
15. "The most commonplace crime is often the most mysterious, because it presents no new or special features from which deductions may be drawn."
16. "There are vague memories in our souls of those misty centuries when the world was in its childhood. One's ideas must be as broad as Nature if they are to interpret Nature."
17. "There is a mystery about this which stimulates the imagination; where there is no imagination there is no horror."
18. "There is no branch of detective science which is so important and so much neglected as the art of tracing footsteps."
19. "There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before."
20. "There is no satisfaction in vengeance unless the offender has time to realize who it is that strikes him, and why retribution has come upon him."
21. "They are mostly sent on by private inquiry agencies. They are all people who are in trouble about something, and want a little enlightening. I listen to their story, they listen to my comments, and then I pocket my fee."
22. "There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colorless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it.
23. "They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. "It's a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work."

24. "What the deuce is it to me?" he interrupted impatiently; "you say that we go round the sun. If we went round the moon it would not make a pennyworth of difference to me or to my work."
25. "What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence. The question is what can you make people believe you have done."
26. "Yes, I have a turn both for observation and for deduction. The theories which I have expressed there, and which appear to you to be so chimerical are really extremely practical -- so practical that I depend upon them for my bread and cheese."
27. "You know a conjurer gets no credit when once he has explained his trick and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all."