



An Inquiry into:
"The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter"

"The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter" was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in August 1904 and in *Collier's Weekly* in November 1904. It is part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

The chronology for this case varies, depending on which Canon expert one consults. However, in this case, most of the experts cited almost unanimously agree on the date, as can be seen on the table on the right.

If the case took place in 1896, as the majority of these Canon chronologists state, at the time Holmes was 42 years old and Watson 44.

Notable Quotes:

"For years I had gradually weaned him from that drug mania which had threatened once to check his remarkable career. Now I knew that under ordinary conditions he no longer craved for this artificial stimulus; but I was well aware that the fiend was not dead, but sleeping."

Not Important Enough for Scotland Yard?

I am always struck in this case by Inspector Hopkins' inexplicable lack of interest in Staunton's seeming disappearance.

Were this a simple missing person's report, where there is no reason to believe that foul play may have taken place and therefore a waiting period is required before beginning official inquiries, I could understand it. However, what we are apparently dealing with here would have seemed well in excess of a simple missing person's report. This is the case of a young man who is member of an important and very wealthy noble family, who is witnessed falling "back in a chair as if he had been pole-axed" upon reading a mysterious note brought to him by a "rough-looking man with a beard." His reaction is so extreme that even a stranger—the porter—becomes sufficiently alarmed to attempt to go for help.

Staunton then vanishes and is not be found in any of the places he usually frequents. His disappearance takes place on the eve of an important game in which he is his team's key player, which without

<i>The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
Canon	February 1896 or 1897
Baring-Gould	Tuesday, December 8, 1896
Bell	February 1897
Blakeney	February 1898
Brend	December 1897
Christ	Tuesday, December 7, 1897
Dakin	December 1897
Folsom	Late June 1900
Hall	December 8, 1896
Keefauver	Saturday, February 6, 1897
Klinger	1896
Zeisler	Tuesday, December 8, 1896

much of a stretch of the imagination might point to a criminal element in play. All this can be added to the fact that he is the heir apparent to an enormous fortune, which might make kidnapping conceivable.

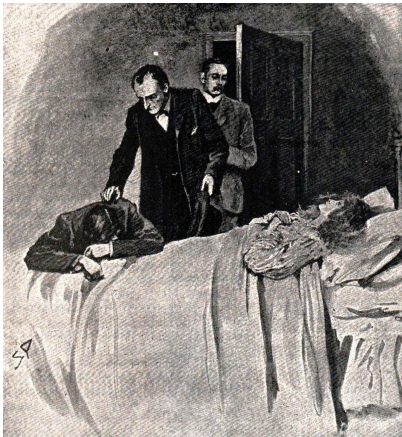
It seems to me that these circumstances should have been more than enough reason for the official police to immediately start inquiries to determine what may have happened to him. Instead, Hopkins sends Overton to Holmes.

Watson's Professional Ignorance

The Good Doctor states that, "It argues the degree in which I had lost touch with my profession that the name of Leslie Armstrong was unknown to me. Now I am aware that he is not only one of the heads of the medical school of the University, but a thinker of European reputation in more than one branch of science."

I truly don't know what to make of this statement. On more than one instance we see that Watson kept up with developments by following the medical literature. In RESI, for example, he was aware that Dr. Trevelyan had written a monograph upon obscure nervous lesions, even though as a surgeon that had not been his specialty. I find it hard to believe that our medico would have distanced himself so much from his chosen profession, that he did not know who those doing important breakthrough work were.

A Crimeless Case



This is one of ten cases in the Canon, in which no actual crime has been committed—his ineptitude in following Dr. Armstrong comes to mind. Did he really think he would not have been noticed, a solitary man riding a bicycle in a country road following a brougham? Unfortunately, it is also one of the least exciting ones. The Great Detective does not exactly distinguish himself, and not many of the capabilities who make him what he is are highlighted or seemed to come into play. This is one of those cases which make one wonder why Watson would have bothered to write it down and make it public. There are so many others, which never saw the light of day, which would have been of far greater interest and made for much more interesting reading.

What else happened in 1896:

Empire

Jameson Raid failure in South Africa provokes crisis; British negotiations with Boers (to 1899) fail.



Matabele Revolt suppressed (1896-97).

◀ Kaiser's telegram to Kruger, congratulating him on the defeat of the Jameson Raid.

Protectorate established in Sierra Leone and East Africa.

Conquest of Sudan begins with the start of Kitchener's campaign against the Madhi (1896-99).

Anglo-French treaty settles boundaries in Siam.

Sudanese railway extended to Wadi Haifa.

Widespread famine in India, to 1897.

Britain

Hotel Cecil, the Strand, built.



National Portrait Gallery moves to present site in Trafalgar Square.

Beginning of period of rising prices and falling wages (until 1914).

Truck Act: regulates deductions from wages or fines for bad workmanship.

◀ Royal Victorian Order founded as Personal Order of Sovereign.

Conciliation Act: boards can settle industrial disputes if both sides are willing.

First all-steel English building erected at West Hartlepool.

Locomotives Act: repeal of "Red Flag" restriction; maximum speed raised to 14 mph.

World

First modern Olympic Games are held at Athens.

Utah admitted as state in the U.S.A.

Klondike Gold Rush in Canada.

France annexes Madagascar.

State visit of Tsar Nicholas to France (Paris).

Van Houten's Franchise Bill extends the Dutch franchise.



French Tunisian protectorate recognized by Italy.

◀ Italians are defeated by Menilek of Abyssinia at Battle of Adwa, resulting in Treaty of Addis-Ababa and end of Italian protectorate.

Massacre of Armenians by Kurds and Circassians supported by the Sultan.

Insurrection in Crete against Turkish rule.

Beginning of the Klondike Gold Rush.

Foundation of Russo-Chinese Bank.

Cassini Treaty: China gives Russia the right to build a railway through Manchuria to Port Arthur.

Russian newspapers granted temporary licenses; imported books and newspapers are strictly censored.

First public film exhibition, in U.S.

Philippine Revolution ends declaring Philippines free from Spanish rule.

Art

Wells publishes *Island of Dr. Moreau*.

Gilbert and Sullivan debut *The Grand Duke*.

Giacomo Puccini debuts *La Bohème at Turin*.

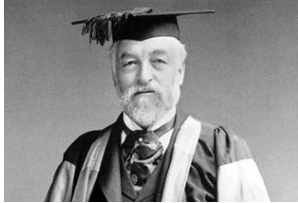
Toulouse-Lautrec paints *Maxime Dethomas*.

R. Strauss debuts *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

Science and Technology

Antoine Henri Becquerel, observes radiation from uranium affects photographic plates; discovery of radioactivity.

Nobel Prizes started, for physics, physiology or medicine, chemistry, literature, furtherance of the cause of peace.



Guglielmo Marconi demonstrates on Salisbury Plain the practicability of wireless telegraphy.

◀ Samuel Langley (U.S.A.) successfully flies a steam-driven model aircraft.

J.J. Thompson identifies the electron, though not by name.

Emile Achard first describes paratyphoid fever.

Rehn, of Frankfort, sutures a heart wound; beginning of heart surgery.

Zeeman observes that light emitted by a substance placed in a magnetic field undergoes changes.

Earliest record of water chlorination, during typhoid outbreak in Italy.

Next week's case: ABBE.

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly..."

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