



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

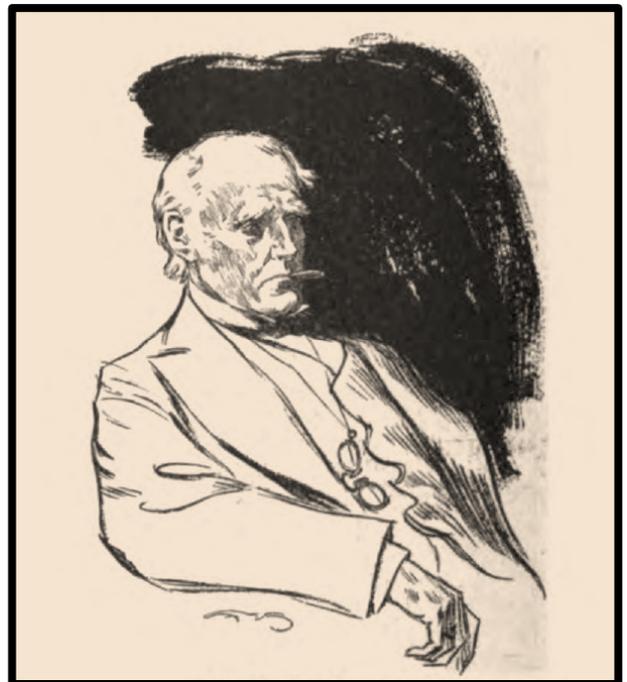
Adventure XXXVIII – The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter

One of the most watched rugby matches of the season, Cambridge versus Oxford, was in the offing. Cambridge had at least an even chance to win due to the presence of Godfrey Staunton, a crack three-quarter of international fame, on its team. As was customary, the Cambridge Light Blues had been sequestered in a private hotel shortly before the day of the Big Match. Every team member was abed by ten o'clock as specified by the team's manager, Cyril Overton – except for Godfrey Staunton, who had disappeared. Beside himself with anxiety, Overton went to Scotland Yard for assistance, and Inspector Stanley Hopkins referred him to Sherlock Holmes.

Since Staunton's only living relative was his uncle, the wealthy (and miserly) Lord Mount-James, there was some concern that Staunton had been kidnapped as a means of getting at his uncle's wealth. Godfrey had been seen last in the company of a distraught stranger, an older man who appeared to be neither gentleman nor labourer. The only tangible clue to Staunton's disappearance was a fragment of a message he had written on a telegraph form: "Stand by us for God's sake!" The telegram was addressed to an eminent physician, Dr. Leslie Armstrong.

This Adventure is a comparatively simple match of wits between the formidable Dr. Leslie Armstrong and Sherlock Holmes. There is not a great deal of substance on which to base my questions. However, such as they are, I herewith present a few:

First, so that those of us who are not familiar with the great sport of rugby might see Godfrey Staunton's disappearance in the proper light, would some of our more knowledgeable List Members please explain the duties of a "three-quarter," and how the loss of such a team member, albeit one that would now be called a



“superstar,” could make such a difference in an entire team’s chances of winning? Is “a goal and two tries” a large margin of victory?

Was Stanley Hopkins’s referral of Cyril Overton to Holmes justifiable? Although I am sure that Scotland Yard had much better things to do than track down every person in England who had disappeared, wouldn’t it have been more in Hopkins’s *métier* to take appropriate action if he saw the need for it? After all, Godfrey Staunton had considerable fame for his athletic prowess among the followers of rugby, which was every bit as popular in those times as it is in these days.

Since Lord Mount-James was Godfrey Staunton’s “only living relative,” it is apparent that the miserly Lord’s sibling(s) had predeceased him. And yet it is apparent that Godfrey himself bore no noble title, else he would have been referred to as “The Honourable Godfrey Staunton.” So, assuming that no title purveyed with his uncle’s estate, why would Lord Mount-James object to Godfrey getting married? How did Godfrey know that he would be disinherited if he married without his uncle’s consent?

To hark back to another story, in *SIGN* Holmes presented the tracking dog Toby with his handkerchief, which had been dipped in creosote before leading the dog to the rain barrel where Jonathan Small had stood after climbing down from Bartholomew Sholto’s room. In *MISS*, there was no mention of Holmes “preconditioning” Pompey the draghound in a similar fashion. Without such prompting, would a draghound follow the scent of aniseed?

If Watson had weaned Holmes away from his cocaine addiction, why did Holmes bring his hypodermic syringe with him to Cambridge? And while we’re talking about medicine (after a fashion), can the medical experts on the List advise as to what form of tuberculosis is the most dangerous, and whether any form acts as quickly as was the case with Godfrey Staunton’s wife?

Lastly, can our British List Members enlighten us as to whether there are any large mansions located on what could be considered the main street(s) of Cambridge?

Steve Clarkson

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