

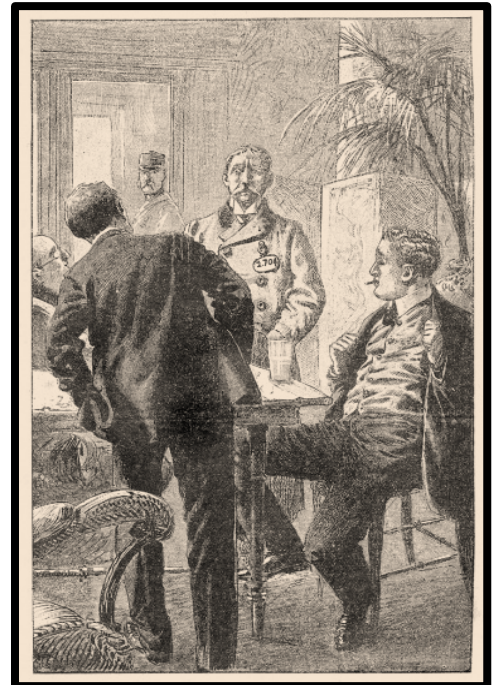


The Hound of the Baskervilles

Sir Charles Baskerville's death was not entirely unexpected; he had been in failing health for some time. What was startling about his demise was the way his face was contorted with some final overpowering emotion, so much so that his friend Dr. Mortimer could barely recognize him. Also startling was a fact that didn't come out in the usual coroner's inquest...that near Sir Charles's body was found a single footprint. Not a man's footprint, nor yet a woman's, but the footprint of a gigantic hound, evocative of a legend about an enormous, fiendish dog that had haunted the Baskerville line for more than two hundred years.

Based on the information in the Medical Directory, it would appear that James Mortimer's training would have best suited a consulting practice in pathology or comparative anatomy. Would this background have been adequate for a country practitioner? And while we're on the subject of Mortimer, what breed of dog is the "nomsake" of one of our respected List Members, the curly-haired spaniel? And has anyone noticed the physical resemblance between Mr./Dr. Mortimer and Professor James Moriarty?

I have sometimes wondered how Stapleton got into Sir Henry's hotel room to remove a boot on two separate occasions, and to return one of the purloined boots on a third occasion? The hotel staff stoutly denied any knowledge of the disappearance of the boots, and the German waiter in particular seemed incapable of dissembling in a convincing fashion.



It's apparent that Stapleton followed Mortimer to London, and so learned that Sir Henry would be staying at the Northumberland Hotel. But why did he follow Sir Henry thereafter, at considerable risk of discovery? He could not hope to strike his intended victim down in broad daylight on the crowded streets of London and get away with it.

Watson says of his first report to Holmes (Chapter 8), "One page is missing, but otherwise they are exactly as written...." What follows is a coherent account of Watson's observations to that point in his investigation. There is nothing about the account that would suggest a missing page. What happened to the page, and what information might it have contained?

I wonder if anyone else noticed that the word "as," which was the first word of the cryptic note sent to Sir Henry, was not to be found in the *Times* article quoted by Holmes?

When Watson saw the silhouette of "The Man on the Tor," who proved to be Holmes, it was three or four o'clock in the morning. What was Holmes doing out and about on the moor at that hour?

Before Sir Henry left Merripit House on the climactic night, Stapleton went to an outbuilding and did something which resulted in "a curious scuffling noise." We may suspect, of course, that the Hound was inside the outbuilding, but what was the purpose of Stapleton's visit at a time when Sir Henry was still inside Merripit House?

Lastly, the route through the Great Grimpen Mire to the isolated tin mine was a tortuous one, with many turns and twists. How did the Stapletons know where to put the guiding rods that marked the path without themselves falling victim to the treacherous Mire?

Steve Clarkson

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