

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SECOND STRAND

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The Sherlock Holmes story featured in this *Almanac*, “The Adventure of the Reigate Squire,”¹ was the nineteenth Holmes short story to see print. It first appeared in the June 1893 issue of *The Strand Magazine*. *The Strand* was the London-based magazine, published by George Newnes, in which 58 of the 60 Holmes stories first appeared between 1891 and 1927. These began with the 24 stories later collected as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1891-1892) and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1892-1893).

The importance of *The Strand* to Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes — and of Conan Doyle and Holmes to *The Strand* — is well known.² “Arthur Conan Doyle was associated with *The Strand* through its entire existence, from an advertisement in the very first issue dated January 1891 to an article titled ‘Holmesiana’ in the last issue for March 1950.”³ Although the Holmes stories were collected soon enough in book form, when British readers first encountered them, it was in *The Strand’s* pages.⁴

But what about contemporary American readers? The early publication history of the stories that became *The Adventures* and *The Memoirs* was far more complex in the United States than in England. Americans who read fiction in the early 1890s might have first met Sherlock Holmes and his chronicler Dr. John Watson in *The Strand’s* pages just as their English

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¹ This is the title that the story bore on its first appearance. For discussion of variant forms of the title, see “The Reigate Puzzle: A Lawyerly Annotated Edition,” *supra*, at 123, n.†.

² Recent works on Conan Doyle and *The Strand* include Philip G. Bergem, *A Doylean and Sherlockian Checklist of The Strand Magazine* (rev. ed. 2014); Robert Veld, *The Strand Magazine & Sherlock Holmes: The Two Fixed Points in a Changing Age* (2014); and Michael Ashley, *Adventures in the Strand* (2016). A general history of *The Strand*, focused almost exclusively on the British edition, is Reginald Pound, *Mirror of the Century: The Strand Magazine 1891-1950* (1966).

³ Bergem, at 1.

⁴ The two Holmes novels that did not first appear in *The Strand*, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of Four* (1890), were published before *The Strand* began publication in 1891.

counterparts did, but others encountered him in more homegrown American newspapers and magazines.

Though *The Strand* is primarily remembered today as a British publication, “[proprietor George] Newnes recognized the importance of the American market from the onset.”⁵ An American edition of the magazine began publication in 1891, at the same time as the British edition, although far fewer copies of the American edition survive for persual today.⁶

From 1891 to 1895, the American edition of *The Strand* had the same contents as the British edition.⁷ Indeed, it appears that the interior pages of each issue were printed from the same or perhaps duplicate printing plates, so that the editorial content of a British *Strand* issue and the corresponding American issue were necessarily the same. The illustration on the covers of the two issues would also be identical. The only visible identifiers of the U.S. edition were the cover price (given in the U.S. in cents rather than pence) and American publication and copyright notices on the bottom of the cover. In addition, because it took time for the printing plates to cross the Atlantic from London to New York, for several years the date of each issue of the U.S. version of the magazine was one month later than the corresponding U.K. issue.⁸ Thus, while “The Reigate Squire” appeared in the June 1893 issue of *The Strand* in London, it appeared in the July 1893 issue of *The Strand* in New York.

However, while the 24 Sherlock Holmes short stories that appeared between 1891 and 1893 were published in the U.S. in *The Strand*, they were not published *only* in *The Strand*. From 1891 on, “Doyle remained faithful to the London edition [of *The Strand*] for all of his Holmes stories but this relationship did not hold true for the American edition. Competition among magazines in America led to the stories being printed farther afield than just in the pages of *The Strand*.”⁹ Each of the first 24

⁵ Bergem, at 8.

⁶ There are a couple of reasons for this. First, most surviving copies of *The Strand* are in bound volumes prepared by the publisher, and it is the U.K. edition that was bound. Second, the U.K. edition’s circulation was always higher than the U.S. edition’s, especially in earlier years. Only a handful of libraries hold any copies of the U.S. edition. These include the University of Minnesota Library and the New York State Library in Albany, N.Y.

⁷ Bergem, at 8.

⁸ See, e.g., Frederick Faxon, “Magazine Perplexities I. *Strand Magazine*,” 1 *Bulletin of Bibliography* 8, at 122 (Jan. 1899); Bergem, at 8.

⁹ Bergem, at 5.

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short stories also was authorized to appear, and did appear, in American newspapers or in an American magazine *at the same time* as the story appeared in the U.S. *Strand*, and sometimes even a few weeks earlier.

The first 12 of these short stories (the ones later collected in book form as *The Adventures*), in addition to appearing in the U.S. *Strand* in 1891 and 1892, appeared at about the same time in American newspapers around the country. For example, the first story,

“A Scandal in Bohemia” was published in the [U.K.] *Strand Magazine* in July 1891. There was a New York edition of the *Strand Magazine*, and the story appeared there as well, in August 1891. However, many of the stories from the *Adventures* were also syndicated, that is, sold by a syndicate to newspapers across the United States. “A Scandal in Bohemia,” for example, appeared in at least seven newspapers *before* the New York *Strand Magazine* publication.¹⁰

The story appeared in several more U.S. papers later in the year.¹¹

These newspapers, which included papers in Chicago, Louisville, Buffalo, New Orleans, Seattle, Washington, Toledo, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Baltimore, and later New York, belonged to the McClure newspaper syndicate. The publisher, S.S. McClure, later recalled in his autobiography:

I brought the first twelve Sherlock Holmes stories from Mr. [A.P.] Watt, Conan Doyle’s agent, and paid £12 (\$60) apiece for them. . . . When I began to syndicate the . . . stories, they were not at all popular with editors. The usual syndicate story ran about five thousand words,

¹⁰ Leslie Klinger, note 1 to “A Scandal in Bohemia”, in 1 *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes 5* (2005). Conan Doyle’s agent delayed publication of the stories in both the U.K. and the U.S. until after July 1, 1891, when the International Copyright Act of 1891 (Chace Act), c. 565, 26 Stat. 1106, providing for U.S. recognition of U.K. copyrights, took effect. See Veld, *supra* note 2, at 20; Randall Stock, “Revealing ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’: Its History and Manuscript,” in Otto Penzler, ed., *Bohemian Souls: A Facsimile of the Original Manuscript of “A Scandal in Bohemia”*, at 105, 114 (BSI Press 2011). Prior to July 1, 1891, works first published in the United Kingdom did not receive copyright protection in the United States and could be freely published by any American publisher without authorial permission or payment of royalties. Just this fate had befallen the two early Sherlock Holmes novels, *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, and Conan Doyle was not going to allow this to happen again. See generally Donald A. Redmond, *Sherlock Holmes Among the Pirates: Copyright and Conan Doyle in America 1890-1930* (1990).

¹¹ For the details of periodical publications of the stories in *The Adventures*, see Richard Lancelyn Green & John Michael Gibson, *A Bibliography of A. Conan Doyle* 54-58 (1983; rev. ed. 2000). A table listing all the Holmes stories, and other writings of Arthur Conan Doyle, in the London and New York *Strands* is found in Bergem, *supra* note, 2, at 20-35.

and these ran up to eight and nine thousand. We got a good many complaints from editors about the length, and it was not until nearly all of the first twelve of the Sherlock Holmes stories had been published, that the editors of the papers I served began to comment favorably on the series and that the public began to take a keen interest.¹²

McClure does not mention that the stories appeared in *The Strand* around the same time they were appearing in his papers.

Conan Doyle wanted to drop the character of Holmes after the twelve stories of *The Adventures*, but *The Strand* secured another series by offering financial terms that Conan Doyle decided he could not refuse. In book form, these stories later appeared as *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*.

The Strand continued to carry these stories in both Britain and America, with each story appearing in the U.S. edition one month after the U.K. edition. However, the non-*Strand* American rights apparently became the subject of competition between the McClure newspaper syndicate, which had just serialized *The Adventures*, and Harper & Brothers, publishers of *Harper's Weekly*, a popular magazine.¹³ Harper won the rights, and "brought Sherlock Holmes to American magazines on January 14, 1893 with 'The Adventure of the Cardboard Box.' Within the year, *Harper's Weekly* ran eleven Holmes stories from *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* series."¹⁴ Each of these stories appeared in an issue of *Harper's Weekly* dated in the same month as the U.K. appearance (and thus dated before the month of the U.S. *Strand* appearance). Thus, "The Reigate Squire," which as noted appeared in the U.K. *Strand* issue of June 1893 and the U.S. *Strand* of July 1893, appeared in the *Harper's Weekly* dated June 17, 1893.

Anomalously, the story with which Conan Doyle ended the series (and at the time intended to end Holmes forever), "The Final Problem," did not appear in *Harper's Weekly*. The author believed he deserved greater compensation for this extraordinary story and on November 5, 1893, he wrote to his literary agent, A.P. Watt: "I hope we'll find an American opening for Sherlock Holmes' death, just as a protest against Cassell's. But if not it

¹² S.S. McClure, *My Autobiography* 204-05 (1914). Other sources give the price as £50. See, e.g., Veld, at 20.

¹³ Eugene Exman, *The House of Harper: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Publishing 176-78* (1967).

¹⁴ Leroy Lad Pakek, *Probable Cause: Crime Fiction in America* 53 (1990). Pakek interestingly compares *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* with the other, non-fictional contents of *Harper's Weekly* and McClure's during the same period. See *id.* at 53-54.

doesn't matter. Or should we settle for £50? Nothing less."¹⁵ Ultimately "The Final Problem" appeared in *McClure's Magazine* for December 1893 and in the American *Strand* in a special "Christmas Number" for 1893.¹⁶

Thus, each story of *The Adventures* and *The Memoirs* was first serialized in the U.S. by two publishers at or near the same time. To a modern reader this is unusual. Publishers almost invariably demand exclusive rights to a work, at least for a specified initial time period and within a specified geographical area — and all the more so when paying premium rates, such as those Conan Doyle received. This anomaly was first pointed out by Sherlockian scholar Bliss Austin, whose 1979 article "Wanderings on a Foreign Strand" in the *Baker Street Miscellanea* revived attention to Holmes's appearances in the American *Strand*.¹⁷ Austin's article also corrected some previously prevalent misconceptions, such as that *The Adventures* and *The Memoirs* had not appeared in the American *Strand* at all.¹⁸

Austin observed that "during 1893, while the stories were running monthly in *The Strand*, the same tales, with the exception of ['The Final Problem'], were being published by *Harper's Weekly*, though not in the same order nor at the same time. As Alice remarked: 'Curiouser and curiouser.'" ¹⁹ Austin described the situation as a "perplexit[y]" and opined that "[j]ust how this duplication came about, and how *Harper's* lost ['The Final Problem'] to *McClure's Magazine*, are interesting questions," although he chose not to speculate about the answers.²⁰ Perhaps, however, today we can go beyond the sort of speculation without data that Sherlock

¹⁵ Letter from Arthur Conan Doyle to A.P. Watt, Nov. 5, 1893, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Collection of Papers, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library. Why Doyle thought of publishing this story in the United States as "a protest against Cassell's" — which had not published any Sherlock Holmes stories, although it had published some of Doyle's other stories — is not clear.

¹⁶ Green & Gibson, at 75. The story also appeared the same month in several of the McClure newspapers.

¹⁷ Bliss Austin, "Wanderings on a Foreign Strand," *Baker Street Miscellanea*, No. 17, at 1 (March 1979). See also Bliss Austin, "More Wanderings on a Foreign Strand: The American Strand Quarterly," *Baker Street Miscellanea*, No. 26, at 1 (Summer 1981). I am indebted to Bergem, *supra* note 2, at 16, for calling these important articles to my attention, as well as for his own contributions on this subject. Regarding Austin's contributions to the Sherlockian world, see Sonia Fetherston, *Prince of the Realm: The Most Irregular James Bliss Austin* (BSI Press 2014).

¹⁸ Austin, "Wanderings," at 1.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 3-4.

²⁰ *Id.*

Holmes would deplore, and infer with some confidence why the stories enjoyed dual publication in America.

To begin with, between 1891 and 1893, Conan Doyle could not — logistically — readily have sold *The Strand* the right to publish his stories in the U.K. without including the right to publish them in the U.S., even if he had wanted to, nor could *The Strand* have bought the stories on that basis. As discussed above, during these years there was no genuinely distinct “American edition” of *The Strand* (although, as we shall see, one would later evolve). The “American *Strand*” was just the British one with a different cover price. Proprietor Newnes saved effort and expense every month by acquiring, editing, and typesetting one set of content, preparing one set of printing plates, printing the British edition in London, and then shipping the plates to New York and printing the American edition there.²¹ At this early stage, Newnes surely would not have accommodated any author’s request that his stories be excluded from the American edition, thereby upsetting the entire production process for the magazine. Conan Doyle may not even have dreamed of asking.

At the same time, everyone seems to have accepted that while *The Strand* enjoyed what we would today call first American serial rights in the stories, it did not have the *exclusive* first American serial rights. Very likely Newnes understood that it would be unreasonable to demand these rights. And likely *McClure’s* and *Harper’s* did not demand them either, because the initial American circulation of *The Strand* was relatively small.²² We do not have circulation figures for *The Strand’s* U.S. edition during these early years. Nineteenth-century magazines were not required to publish their circulation figures²³ and many declined to do so,²⁴ leaving any assessment

²¹ The “manufacturing clause” of the 1891 copyright act (*see supra* note 10) required that to be copyrightable in the United States, a work must be printed from type set in the United States or from prints made from such type. Many publishers, however, sought to evade the intent if not the letter of this requirement.

²² That is, McClure and Harper seem to have been content to publish the stories at about the same time they were appearing in *The Strand*. That is not to say that either would have tolerated sharing the rights with the other, as they were direct competitors and McClure, at least, “had never heard of a publisher’s loving cup.” Exman, *supra* note 13, at 176. As a seeming counterexample, the first story of *The Memoirs*, “Silver Blaze,” did appear in two McClure newspapers before it ran in *Harper’s Weekly*, but this seems to have resulted from a misunderstanding over the rights, and co-publication by Harper and McClure did not happen again.

²³ The first U.S. legislation requiring what evolved into the familiar “Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation” was the Act of August 24, 1912, 37 Stat. 553. The statute was

(then or now) to estimation and guesswork. Nonetheless, we can state with confidence that *The Strand's* U.S. circulation was limited.

In April 1891, when Watt sold the American rights to *The Adventures* to McClure, neither man may even have realized that *The Strand* had an American edition. In an April 14, 1891 letter, Watt wrote to McClure confirming McClure's offer to acquire "the American serial rights" to one of Conan Doyle non-Holmes novels, *The Doings of Raffles Haw*. In the same letter, Watt also confirmed that McClure would pay 50 pounds for "a series of a detective nature relating to the experiences of a Mr Sherlock Holmes, also by Dr Doyle," which was "to be published in this country [the U.K.] in a monthly magazine." [footnote here] Not only did no one mention that the British monthly magazine also had some limited circulation in America, but the fact that the stories would appear in *The Strand* rather than some other British monthly was not mentioned at all. Watt did not tell McClure and probably Newnes had not told Watt.²⁵

By 1893 (the publication year of "Reigate"), an economic downturn in the U.S. left "[t]he American *Strand* . . . particularly hard hit since, despite the attraction of the Holmes stories, its circulation had been, and was still, discouragingly small."²⁶ Moreover, the compendious *N.W. Ayer & Son's Newspaper Annual*, which listed estimated circulation figures for

intended to address what were perceived as abuses of discounted second-class mailing privileges by publishers. See generally Ross E. Davies, *The Regulatory Adventure of the Two Norwood Builders*, 2015 Green Bag Alm. 567, and sources cited therein. The 1912 Act required all periodicals to publish ownership and management information, but only newspapers were required to include circulation information. 37 Stat. at 554. This requirement was extended to magazines in 1960, see Act of June 24, 1960, 74 Stat. 208, and is currently codified at 39 U.S.C. § 3685(a)(4).

²⁴ When a would-be advertiser asked the publisher of *Harper's Weekly* to reveal the magazine's circulation, "[t]he publishers plainly regarded him as a prying busybody" and rejected his agency's next set of advertisements to show what they thought of his inquiry. Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* 21 (1956; 2d ed. 1964). However, Pearson concludes that *Harper's Magazine* (a different publication from, though co-owned with, *Harper's Weekly*) "apparently had between 100,000 and 200,000 readers in 1891, and few other magazines had more than that." *Id.* at 3.

²⁵ Letter from A.P. Watt to S.S. McClure, April 14, 1891, in A.P. Watt & Son letterbooks, vol. 25 at 186, A.P. Watt & Son Records, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library.

²⁶ Austin, "Wanderings," *supra* note 17, at 4 (citing a 1901 column in which Newnes stated that "while at first *The Strand Magazine* had very little sale in America," although "it has now . . . [gained] a very widespread circulation" in excess of 200,000).

thousands of periodicals, does not even mention *The Strand* in its listings for 1893-1894, although by 1898 it estimated *The Strand's* U.S. circulation at 150,000.²⁷

Moreover, the publishers may have reasoned that *The Strand*, with its British-focused content, probably drew much of its American readership from different circles than either the daily newspapers or *Harper's Weekly*, so the papers and the magazine were unlikely to lose much circulation because *The Strand* was also publishing the stories. Finally, the national circulations of the newspaper syndicate and of *Harper's Weekly* surely extended to many parts of the U.S. that *The Strand* did not reach.

All of these things were true, at least, between 1891 and 1893, and help to explain the "perplexity" of *The Adventures'* and *The Memoirs'* dual American serializations. Thereafter, for the remainder of the Sherlockian Canon, things were different.

After *The Memoirs*, Conan Doyle published no Holmes stories until the nine serialized parts of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1901-1902, followed by the thirteen stories collected as *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* in 1903-1904. But by this era, *The Strand* had created a *bona fide* U.S. edition, distinct from its British edition.²⁸ The two editions were not totally different, of course; the contents of the magazines continued to overlap, and the printing plates for the U.S. edition were still manufactured in London and shipped to New York. But the U.S. edition increasingly included content aimed at American readers, while omitting content of interest primarily to British (and British Empire) readers.

Because the contents of the two magazines were now different, it was readily possible for an author to sell the British rights to an article or story to *The Strand*, while retaining the American rights for sale to an American magazine. And because *The Strand's* U.S. circulation now made it a much

²⁷ N.W. Ayer & Sons *Newspaper Annual* 1893-94, at 1088-92 (omitting *The Strand* while giving circulation of 85,000 for *Harper's Weekly*) (available on Library of Congress website). By 1898, the same directory gives the U.S. *Strand* an estimated circulation of 150,000, see N.W. Ayer & Sons *Newspaper Annual* 1898, at 1148, but by that time the American edition of the *Strand* was a very different magazine.

²⁸ See, e.g., Bergem, *supra* note 2, at 8-10; Austin, "Wanderings," at 4-12; "The One Hundredth Number of 'The Strand Magazine': A Chat about Its History by Sir George Newnes, Bart.," *The Strand*, vol. 17, no. 100 at 363-64 (Apr. 1899) (stating that the magazine's "sale in America has also become very large" and that the "American Edition is specially edited for that market").

more formidable competitor to the American magazines, it must have been necessary for authors wishing to maximize their pay to do just that.²⁹ Likely for this reason, *The Hound's* serialization was handled differently from *The Adventures* and *The Memoirs*. The nine parts appeared in both the U.K. and U.S. *Strands* (from August 1901 to April 1902 in the U.K.; from September 1901 to May 1902 in the U.S.). Only after the entire novel had appeared in *The Strand* were the second American serial rights released to the McClure syndicate, whose newspapers republished the story between July and September 1902.³⁰

Next, for the 13 stories of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, Conan Doyle broke away from the American *Strand* altogether. He had reluctantly agreed to revive Holmes in this series of stories after receiving a lucrative offer from another American magazine, *Collier's Weekly Magazine*.³¹ The stories appeared in the U.K. *Strand* between October 1903 and December 1904 — but in the U.S. they appeared exclusively in *Collier's Weekly*, and not in the U.S. *Strand* at all.³² The chapters of the last Holmes novel, *The Valley of Fear* (1914-1915), likewise never appeared in the American *Strand*,³³ nor did a majority of the short stories (1908-1913) later collected in *His Last Bow*.³⁴

The Strand stopped publishing its American edition in 1916,³⁵ while its

²⁹ Likewise, the editors were now able to decide that a given submission would appeal to a British but not to an American audience, or the reverse, and base their purchasing decisions accordingly.

³⁰ Green & Gibson, *supra* note 11, at 127-29; see also Bergem, *supra* note 2, at 5 (“*The Strand*, in both England and America, had a monopoly on th[is] series of stories although they were reprinted in a variety of newspapers across America after the first series as complete.”).

³¹ See, e.g., Bergem, at 6; see also Cattleya Concepcion, *The Adventure of the Elusive Postcard*, 2015 Green Bag. Alm. 442, 443-45, and sources cited therein.

³² Green & Gibson, at 138-40. This was not the first time that a Conan Doyle story appeared in the U.K. but not the U.S. *Strand*. See Austin, “Wanderings”, at 7 (noting that Conan Doyle’s story “Rodney Stone” was published in 1896 in the U.K. but not the U.S. edition).

³³ Green & Gibson, at 176.

³⁴ *Id.* at 180-82. Two stories in *His Last Bow*, “The Adventure of the Red Circle” and “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot,” did appear in both the U.S. *Strand* and another publication. *Id.*; see Austin, “Wanderings,” at 1, 11-12. This must have resulted from story-specific negotiations. “The Cardboard Box” and “His Last Bow,” both found in *His Last Bow*, are irrelevant to this discussion, as the former was merely a long-delayed reprinting of a story from *The Return*, while the latter first appeared after the U.S. *Strand* was discontinued. The 12 stories of *The Case-Book* are not discussed here for the same reason.

³⁵ See, e.g., “American Strand Magazine Quits,” *The Fourth Estate* 17 (Jan. 22, 1916) (stating

better-remembered British counterpart continued to appear monthly until 1950. As discussed above, for a long time it had been forgotten that much of the Canon first appeared in both the British and the American *Strands*. But for those interested in the introduction and reception of Sherlock Holmes in the United States,³⁶ it is good to know about *The Adventures* in the second *Strand*.

that “[a] ban recently put upon the exportation of all metals by the British government made it impossible to send over the plates from the English Strand for use in the American edition”).

³⁶ See generally Bill Blackbeard, *Sherlock Holmes in America* (1981).