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OR

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four***

Read the following extract from Chapter 2 and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the novel, Holmes and Watson meet Miss Morstan for the first time, when she visits them and asks for their help to solve her problem.

Miss Morstan entered the room with a firm step and an outward composure of manner. She was a blonde young lady, small, dainty, well gloved, and dressed in the most perfect taste. There was, however, a plainness and simplicity about her costume which bore with it a suggestion of limited means. The dress was a sombre grayish beige, untrimmed and unbraided, and she wore a small turban of the same dull hue, relieved only by a suspicion of white feather in the side. Her face had neither regularity of feature nor beauty of complexion, but her expression was sweet and amiable, and her large blue eyes were singularly spiritual and sympathetic. In an experience of women which extends over many nations and three separate continents, I have never looked upon a face which gave a clearer promise of a refined and sensitive nature. I could not but observe that as she took the seat which Sherlock Holmes placed for her, her lip trembled, her hand quivered, and she showed every sign of intense inward agitation.

“I have come to you, Mr. Holmes,” she said, “because you once enabled my employer, Mrs. Cecil Forrester, to unravel a little domestic complication. She was much impressed by your kindness and skill.”

“Mrs. Cecil Forrester,” he repeated thoughtfully. “I believe that I was of some slight service to her. The case, however, as I remember it, was a very simple one.”

'Mary Morstan is a typical example of a meek Victorian gentlewomen.'

Starting with this extract, how far do you agree with this statement?

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle writes about Mary Morstan in this extract.
- how Conan Doyle writes about Mary Morstan in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

**END OF QUESTION**

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