

The Adventure of the Lost Locomotive - LosL
The Memoirs of Solar Pons, 1951
The Memoirs of Solar Pons

Date

Copper/May 1921

Patrick/June, 1922

Quotes

- *I concede it is highly improbable. One ought not to confuse the improbable with the impossible.*

The Case

Sir Ernest McVeagh, Director of the Great Northern Railway. American James Mason had chartered a special for Sheffield the previous evening. Number 177 had vanished after passing Girton and could not be found. Pons sets out to locate the train and its mysterious passenger.

Comments

- Inspector Jamison quotes tosses one of Pons' maxims back at him, saying "I believe it was you who once said that if the possible explanations are shown to be inadequate, then the only remaining explanation, however untenable, must be true."
- Again we see the Assumption Principle applied. Pons says, "I am afraid our good Inspector Jamison has proceeded on the theory that you have just advanced, that the locomotive did not actually vanish. Let us, on the contrary, assume that it did..."

Pons' refutation of the basic assumption assumed by someone else involved with the case, followed by his pursuit of the opposite assumption, leads him to the solution. Throughout the Pontine Canon, we see this device.

- This tale follows the path of Doyle's *The Lost Special*. However, it has a very different ending and is a good example of how Derleth could imitate Sir Arthur, yet come up with original twists that satisfied the reader. Both do contain a grand conspiracy, however.
- Bob Byrne lists this as one of his five favorite Pons stories.