

The Adventure of the Mosaic Cylinders - Mosa
The Saint Mystery Magazine, August, 1959
The Reminiscences of Solar Pons, 1961

Date

Copper/May, 1934

Patrick/1935

Quotes

- *I have had three whole days without a single problem to tax me, and I am near to suffocating with boredom.*
- *In matters of this kind, Parker, one must begin either by accepting the available evidence or rejecting it. Plainly, you reject it. Let us start by accepting it.*

The Case

Cecil Bowne is murdered and suspicion falls on Angus Birell, his ward and heir. Detective-Sergeant Howard Burnham brings Birell to meet with Pons at Praed Street. Bowne was struck down outside his house and found, dying. Inside his pocket was a cylinder, covered in mosaic decorations and with a type of lock consisting of the letters of the alphabet. Pons finds a scrap of paper in the cylinder and sets out to find the murderer.

Comments

- Thomas Hawkins is heavily bandaged when we first meet him; the result of an auto accident that killed his uncle. Yet he is running nimbly at the end of the tale a few days later. Were his injuries were feigned, though we are never told that for certain? How did he fool everyone else when it was time to treat the injuries? Surely the authorities attended him at the scene of the crash? There is much related to this aspect of the case that calls for further attention.
- This is one of the rare cases during which Parker is unable to assist Pons because the doctor must attend to his medical practice. Parker has to “step out” of the case for two days to take care of his practice. A monograph upon that very subject will be posted on this website in the future.

However, Parker’s absence may well have worked to Pons’ advantage since the detective apparently did a great deal of hiking and climbing in the countryside. The adventures paint Pons as much more athletic and agile than Parker.

- When shown a mosaic cylinder similar to one formerly held by his father, Harold Reed’s reaction is chronicled by Parker:

“Alike as two peas’ said the younger reed, staring at the sovereign box as if unable to take his eyes from it. Indeed, his fingers trembled with excitement or eagerness as he held out his hand as if to take it for a moment before he withdrew it.”

One expects the next sentence to be “‘My Precious,’ hissed Reed as he launched himself at Pons, grabbing wildly for the cylinder. ‘Give us our precious!’”

- Derleth was a master at painting a picture of the scene. One example of this was his ability to present smells to his readers.

“The May morning was wonderfully sweet with the perfume of spring flowers and the pungence of foliage, particularly strong after a light rainfall during the night and the world through which we walked was surely the most idyllic of the countryside.”