

The Adventure of The Purloined Periapt – Purl
In Re: Sherlock Holmes, 1945
Regarding Sherlock Holmes: The Adventures of Solar Pons

Date

Copper/Late April, 1921

Patrick/May, 1922

Quotes

- *Now then, Parker, let us see what you make of that fellow going there. You know my methods, apply them.*
- *Ah, you know my methods, Parker. Apply them.*
- *Parker: I am by no means anti-religious, but these Scriptures are as heavy as lead.*
Pons: Spoken like a true sinner, Parker.

The Case

Sidney Harris visits Praed Street because a periapt, willed to him by his recently deceased uncle, Teale Murchison, has been stolen. Murchison was a publisher of religious books and had left his house and the periapt to his nephew instead of to his wayward son, Richard. Pons visits Harris' lodgings and finds the periapt on his dresser. Parker declares the whole silly affair a wild goose chase, but Pons is convinced that the game is afoot, though the good doctor cannot see the clues evident in the scripture quotation etched into the periapt.

Comments

- *The Purloined Periapt* is a wonderful example of the 'treasure hunt' mystery and far superior to *The Adventure of The Retired Novelist*.
- A periapt is an amulet, considered a good luck piece or worn to ward off evil spirits. Pons comments that Roman Catholics are not known for superstitious trinkets (a statement only partially accurate). He emphasizes that the amulet wasn't meant to be a good luck piece for Harris, but Parker simply cannot understand the significance of it. Throughout the story Pons encourages Parker to figure things out, but to no avail.
- Purl marks the first appearance of the Praed Street Irregulars, led by Alfred Peake. Alfred finds a useful piece of evidence for Pons.
- As occurred in *The Adventure of the Norcross Riddle*, Parker makes a few limited observations (this time about a man about to visit their lodgings). He then supposes that Pons is about to make a host of incredible conclusions regarding the man. Pons' reply is outstanding:

"No, no, you overrate my poor powers, Parker. I was about to add only that he is unmarried; he lives in the suburbs of London; he cycles to work; he is very probably a bookkeeper; and he is employed in our immediate vicinity. Moreover,

he is not imaginative, but rather prosaic; he is precise and methodical, but sparing at the expense of neatness, and he is at the moment doing without his luncheon in an effort to accomplish something which has nothing to do with his work, for he is too conscientious to take time away from his work to pursue an inquiry into a purely personal matter.”

Pons then explains his series of deductions to an astonished Parker. It must be acknowledged that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle set the standard for this type of scene, but there are many who would assert, with a strong basis, that August Derleth surpassed Doyle and is the reigning master of the form.

- Purl is only one of two pastiches that August Derleth said satisfied him (the other was *The Adventure of the Six Silver Spiders*). Anthony Boucher counts it as his favorite Pons tale. Luther Norris ranked it his ninth favorite, while Peter Ruber includes it among his eleven most favored stories.