

The Adventure of the Red Leech - RedL

The Chronicles of Solar Pons, 1973

Date - Copper/August, 1931

The Case

Agatha Cosby comes to Praed Street, prompted by the unusual circumstances of her brother's death. Her brother David had received a box containing a repulsive worm, a red leech, inside. Upon sight of the worm, he cried out, fell back in his chair and lapsed into unconsciousness. He died three days later, not having been moved from the chair.

Quotes

- *Capital, Parker, capital! It cheers me to be provided with such evidence of your progress in ratiocination.*
- *Ah, Parker – Sir Walter (Scott) is among the most instructive of writers.*

Comments

- This case was inspired by one of Dr. Watson's famous untold tales. In *The Golden Pince-Nez*, he refers to 'the repulsive story of the red leech.' Other pastiche writers have told this tale, but I don't believe any approached it in the manner that Derleth did.
- Parker opens this account with two more tantalizing references to untold tales: 'The curious affair of Ashness Bridge' and 'The strange adventure of Symond's Yat.' Ashness Bridge is a packhorse stone bridge in the English Lake District.

Symonds Yat (without the apostrophe) is a village in the Forest of Dean, on the River Wye. "Yat" has an old meaning of gate or pass. Pons travelled to the village of Rye, where the Cosby's lived. Having wrapped up the case, Pons and Parker immediately caught a train back to London. Yet some time during this summer or fall, they had another case that would seem to involve Rye. Did Parker not record some event or circumstance that led to this other case? Perhaps in solving Agatha Cosby's case, his reputation brought someone else from the area, possibly even the official force, to him for help? There is certainly something worth investigating in this unrecorded case!

- Pons, examining David Cosby's bookshelves, comments on William (Hope) Hodgson's expertise in writing horror stories set at sea. Most readers of Pons and Holmes know of Hodgson for his tales of Carnacki, the occult detective. But Hodgson had spent several years at sea and used his experiences to write many dark tales on the water.