

*The Adventure of the Unique Dickensians - Uniq*  
*The Adventure of the Unique Dickensins, 1969*  
*The Chronicles of Solar Pons*

Date

Copper/December 23–24, 1920

The Case

The penurious Ebenezer Snawley comes to visit Praed Street on the day before Christmas Eve. One of the world's finest collectors of Charles Dickens works, he is being plagued by a man who marches in front of Snawley's home each evening, robustly singing street songs from Dickens' own time. Pons, intrigued, agrees to ride in Snawley's horse-drawn hansom cab back to the man's home and look into the affair.

Quotes

- Pons: *This Christmas season...holds the promise of being a merry one..*
  
- Snawley: *Christmas is a time for well-meaning fools to go about bestowing useless gifts on other fools.*
  
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- *Having completed this scrutiny, he took up the lamp and, holding it aloft in one hand, crept around and around the body in ever-widening circles. At intervals, he placed the lamp on the floor, in order to scrutinize anything that might catch his eye. It was an hour before this process was completed, but at last Pons rose and gave the lamp to one of the constables. (Parker's narration)*

Comments

- This short adventure was published by itself in 1968 and later included in *The Chronicles of Solar Pons*.
  
- Ebenezer Snawley's servant is Pip Scratch, who "was stooped and wore on his thin face and expression of dubiety and resignation.." Surely his first name is culled from the main character of Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

Of course, 'Ebenzer was the first name of the famed Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol* and 'Snawley' is a character that can be found in *Nicholas Nickleby*. It should then be no surprise that he instructs Scratch to serve glasses of (The Cask of) Amontillado. One wonders whether or not someone was buried alive in the basement in Upper Norwood.

- Ebenezer Snawley is certainly one of the most enjoyable characters to be found in the Canon. Visually, from his clothes, his mode of transportation and his residence, he is a man of the Victorian era, or even prior, rather than an Edwardian. He is crotchety, querulous, a spendthrift, short with others, a hard

taskmaster and jealous of his possessions. From his introduction to Pons, demanding to know the cost of a consultation before even crossing the doorstep to his solicitation of free medical advice from Parker, Snawley steals every scene that he is in.

- We come across the name of Dennis Golders near the end of the story. Golders had previously been encountered in *The Praed Street Dossier's Notebooks* in the case known as *The Book-sellers' Clerk*, which is believed to have taken place in 1920. Pons had indicated then that Golders' nearly perfect talents at forgery could be put to good use by brother Bancroft. Apparently his belief was correct, as Golders was working for the government by the time it was discovered that he had faked the manuscript of *Master Humphrey's Clock*.
- Solar Pons displays his humor in many different shadings throughout the Canon. Here, we are treated to Pons' demand that Snawley invite his tormenter (along with Pons and Parker) to a smorgasbord feast for Christmas dinner. When Snawley objects, Pons quotes the outrageous sum of 500 pounds as his fee. Snawley grudgingly agrees to feed the three men. Surely Pons could not have selected a more enjoyable burden to lay upon his client, given the holiday circumstances.
- Pons comments of Snawley and Micah Auber, "This pair is surely unique.." While a pair is an individual unit and can accurately be termed unique, Auber and Snawley are two people, which would inherently imply that they can't be unique in the same way.

Actually, that last statement is not necessarily true. Oxford defines unique as "being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else." But a further definition states "remarkable or unusual." The latter definition certainly applies to these two collectors of Dickensiana.

- Issue Four of the Solar Pons Gazette contains an annotated version of this tale and can be obtained via email request to [Bob@SolarPons.com](mailto:Bob@SolarPons.com)