

Sherlock Holmes and the missing box : (with apologies to Dr. A. Conan Doyle).

Contributors

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SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE MISSING BOX.

(With apologies to Dr. A. Conan Doyle.)

Yes, it had gone! Where and how no one could fathom. Evidently the only thing to be done was to call in my friend, Sherlock Holmes, whose marvellous detective feats and miraculous deductions in tracing the perpetrators of mysterious crimes had startled the entire civilised world, and set them wonderingly twiddling their thumbs while discussing his extraordinary ingenuity.

The box itself was not of much intrinsic value, but its contents were absolutely priceless. I had carelessly neglected to secure it in the safe and left it lying on my dressing table—I was confident of this. The servants were closely questioned—I did not care to search their boxes at this stage. They all indignantly protested absolute ignorance of its whereabouts; my wife repudiated all knowledge of it. In my dilemma I wired as follows:—

TO {	<i>Holmes, Baker Street W.</i>			
	<i>Come immediately in</i>	<i>great</i>	<i>distress</i>	
	<i>box</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>valuable</i>	<i>contents</i>
	<i>no</i>	<i>clue</i>		<i>missing</i>
FROM {	<i>Watson</i>			

Within a very short period I recognised his characteristic ring at the door.

"Ah! Watson," he said as he rushed into the sitting-room, "you were at a banquet last night and stayed till very late, failed to obtain a cab, and walked home in the rain along the Strand without an umbrella, smoking a posener clay, which you had the misfortune to break. How do I know? Nothing so simple; I saw your silk hat in the hall as I came in bearing unmistakable signs of a recent wetting, if you had taken a cab or had an umbrella it would have been in its usual glossy condition; your boots are covered with tar and cement—the Strand is being relaid,—I recognised fragments of your pipe and favourite mixture, Latakia and navy cut, lying on the step; I know you had a dozen "poseners" specially made for you of a peculiar shape, and I see on the table a menu card of last night's masonic banquet; a man with half-an eye can see you have a severe bilious attack in consequence of the rich food you partook of.—Now about the box."

"Well," said I laughingly, "you have unwittingly mentioned the very reason that makes me so anxious to find it. I only paid 1s. 1½d. for it and contents—the latter are certainly worth a guinea; to me at the present moment they are simply invaluable and indispensable; the chemist is closed, and if I don't find this box of Beecham's Pills to-night, I shall—with this beastly bilious attack on me—be quite incapacitated for work to-morrow."

"There," said Holmes quietly, "have some of mine, I always carry them with me, and to their head-clearing qualities I owe much of my success—in fact it is part of my SYSTEM to use them in my SYSTEM."

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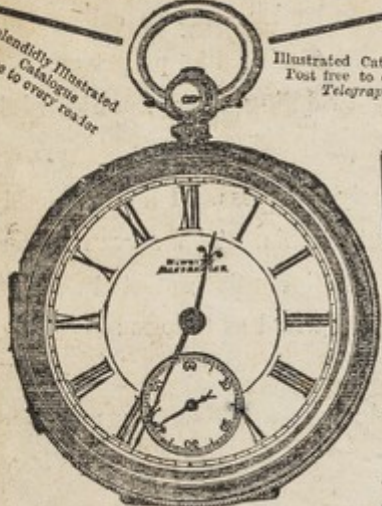
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