



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXI – The Adventure of the Reigate Squire (Puzzle)

Some thoughts and puzzlers from my REIG margin notes...

Holmes is unable to cope with, or acknowledge, the accolades when all Europe is ringing with his name. Granted, he's exhausted and depressed, but gadzooks, what a difference a simple change of venue makes! In Reigate, he positively basks in the praise of Inspector Forrester, the Colonel, Acton, and Watson. The heartfelt compliments of "little people" seem so much more meaningful to the Great Detective than does official praise.

The spectacle of Hayter's unnamed butler, "with all his propriety shaken out of him," bursting in on his employer's meal is simply not believable. No properly-trained English butler would disrupt a meal, murder notwithstanding. I once discussed this scene in REIG with a retired professional butler who assured me that it is improper for a butler to speak at all during breakfast. During lunch and dinner speaking is permitted, but never breakfast. Food for thought?

Holmes suggests a reward of £50, and Cunningham allows that he would willingly give £500.

Once the case is solved, would SH try to lay claim to the reward money? Is there an ethical problem with his receiving it since he had a hand in setting the total?



William appears to lead a comfortable life for a coachman. He has a private, “pretty” cottage, not simply a loft over the stable. His mother lives with him. He’s normally in bed at a very decent hour for a servant. Makes me wonder whether William hadn’t threatened the Cunninghams with blackmail for a long time, for all sorts of offenses.

In REIG the mystery is solved...sort of. We’re left with many, many questions about the Cunninghams, Annie, and William. Is this unsatisfying for the reader, or does it make REIG all the more tantalizing, a la the unchronicled cases?

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