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Behind the Riddle

The remarkable cipher valentine which originated in the small town of Leedsboro, and gained a national reputation some years ago, has been solved at last in a way that casts little romantic interest in this strange little story of mystery. The puzzle was the work of Edward Weld, of Backworth, whose sister Alice had married John M. Shepard, of Leedsboro. It consisted of twelve lines of doggerel written on the back of a valentine, which, if rightly read, revealed a very important secret. Shepard was well to do at the time of his marriage, and his wife had about £3,000. They might have passed their days in comfort, but the husband fell into dangerous ways, beguiled by one of those glibular letters which are sent into the rural districts by a certain class of city brokers. He began to speculate, and within two years his own property was in a nearly hopeless condition, and he had wrongfully used some hundreds of pounds belonging to his wife.

In these operations he manifested an ingenuity almost incredible, borrowing two or three times upon the same security in that little town where everybody was supposed to know everybody else's business, and yet entirely escaping suspicion until, when the wreck was nearly complete, his wife learned the truth. She immediately communicated with her brother Edward, and he came to Leedsboro with all speed. There must have been a painful scene in the old Shepard home, but not a whisper of it got abroad. Even Uncle William Weld, who lived in the town, was kept wholly in ignorance. It was decided to save Shepard in his native place, where exposure and disgrace were coming in at a gallop, and nothing but ready cash could avail. Weld returned to Backworth to see what he could do with his sister's remaining property and Shepard's pecuniary interests in the stock market. He succeeded in much more promptly than he had hoped in raising the sum required, and left Backworth for Leedsboro with £1,250 in his pocket.

Alice was not expecting him, and she had gone to Hortonville, a neighboring town. It was thought that she would return in the afternoon, and her brother waited. Then came word that she would remain overnight. Edward was obliged to take the late afternoon train for Backworth, and he was in a quandary about the money. He dared not trust Shepard with a penny, and he was under pledge to keep the secret inviolate.

He spent most of the day at Uncle William Weld's house and probably meditated taking him into his confidence, but finally decided upon another course. In the middle of the afternoon Edward and his uncle walked over to the Shepard house, and on the way Edward bought the valentine which subsequently became the centre of so much interest.

When they reached the house, Uncle William, who was not on good terms with Shepard, having opposed the marriage with all his power, strolled out to the barn to wait for his nephew, and there encountered Shepard. Meanwhile Edward was in the house, and no eye was upon him. There he went or what he did could be learned only from a brief and his scrawl which he left for his sister.

He finally joined the other men in the barn and had a few words in private with Shepard. Later he took the train to Backworth, and when he arrived there he found that his sister had ridden with him, having caught the train at a station beyond Hortonville. What sudden impulse led her to do this no one now alive knows. She remained with Edward in Newton, a suburb of Backworth, two days and then came a telegram saying that Shepard was dying.

The brother and sister hastened to Backworth, missed the evening train by a very few minutes, and decided to remain for the night in a hotel. It was the Hotel Earlington of awful memory, and that night witnessed its destruction. Edward and Alice were among the victims of the fire, and as there was nothing to show which of them perished first the law presumed that he survived her. This was important because Shepard had died early in the evening. Thus all the property of the three passed to Edward's son, Frank, then in his ninth year.

Edward had been a widower, and Frank was his only child. Uncle William Weld was appointed guardian, and Frank lived with him until he became of age.

In regard to Shepard's death, the servant maid, who was the only person having a knowledge of the matter, reported that after Edward Weld's visit Shepard appeared to love his wife. First he locked himself in the library. Then he went rushing round the house, ripping open drawers, trunks and boxes. He repeatedly demanded that she should tell him what Mr. Weld had done in that

house. She could say no more than that he had been in the library and that she thought she had heard him upstairs.

Shepard's conduct is explained by the fact that he had opened Edward Weld's note to Alice, as the writer had feared that he would do. The effect upon him may be understood by a glance at the contents: Money put away in this house. Writing hastily at desk in library. Uncle's waiting in barn for me. Cipher in valentine tells you the place. This same trick we have used several times before—Edward.

Shepard had immediately opened the other envelope containing the valentine and had discovered the mystic verses, which ran thus, the peculiar number of the lines being here preserved:

- (1) Flash of gold in Cupid's eye
- (2) Sends his sharpest darts awry
- (3) In these modern days.
- (4) He doth know where sovereigns bide;
- (5) Better than where true hearts hide;
- (6) Sad these modern ways.
- (7) There's a love that's new and old.
- (8) Takes no thought of mingled gold
- (9) 'E'en in these bad days;
- (10) Trust a brother's steadfast faith
- (11) Dear as life and strong as death;
- (12) Guide in troublous ways.

It was a long time before anybody advanced a step in the solution. The strain of the attempt undoubtedly hastened Shepard's end. He was found on the floor unconscious, and he died within a few hours of hemorrhage of the brain.

What may be called the documents of the case passed into Uncle William Weld's hands, and he spent many a weary hour over those rude verses. He searched the house fifty times, and might even have pulled it down, but it passed into the hands of Deacon Wiltard Webster of Leedsboro on a mortgage given by Shepard.

Meanwhile Uncle William had striven in secret with the valentine cipher. He resorted after a time to experts in such matter and finally had the verses come before the public. They used to be handed around in sewing circles and similar gatherings in that part of Maine as a species of amusement, and nobody knows how many minds they unsettled, for it finally spread all over the country.

Frank had his troubles with them, but his uncle always taught him to look upon the money as lost, knowing how unwise it is to permit such a will-o'-the-wisp to flicker before the eyes of youth. It is easier to teach that doctrine than to follow it. Frank never forgot that he had £1,250 hidden in the old Shepard house in Leedsboro. The day came when he needed the money. He had gone into the employ of a mercantile establishment in Backworth after leaving college, and there the chance of his life came to him. One of the partners got into trouble with the other two and decided to withdraw. Frank, seizing a favorable opportunity, secured an option on the share in the business. But an initial payment of £1,000 had to be made, and Frank did not know where to lay hands upon that sum. In this emergency he bethought him of the money that had lain for fourteen years in the old Shepard house, and he resolved to make one last desperate attempt to solve the riddle of the valentine. The original was in the keeping of Uncle William Weld, and Frank went to Leedsboro to study it. Uncle William viewed this proceeding with well founded alarm, and he made secret efforts to scoure the sum that Frank needed, being convinced that the young man's opportunity was one the like of which would not come again.

Frank Weld worked two days upon the valentine puzzle, and began to show signs of mental collapse. He was a big, robust, handsome fellow, but he was not fitted for that particular line of endeavor, and it told upon his nerves. He had the air of one who has sat up several successive nights with a stick friend, as Uncle William expressed it; and, though the old gentleman spoke lightly, he was seriously troubled. As a diversion for Frank's mind he suggested inviting the object of the young man's affections to visit at the old Weld home.

Thus it happened that Miss Florence Deane got down from the train at Leedsboro one morning, and charmed all beholders between the station and the old Weld house, which was almost at the other end of the town. She was a bright girl, with a reputation for solving puzzles, and Frank had high hopes that she would make something of the original valentine, though she had failed with a copy. But, as in all other cases, it was the valentine that emerged from the strudel victorious. At the end of two days Florence received positive commands from Aunt Mary Weld not to look at the verses again. She was compelled to take the air, to walk about the village, which was quaintly charming even under the

mantle of snow; but though her body was thus coerced, her mind could not be so easily controlled. She began to have a hunted, scared look, like that of one who is attended by a ghost. As for Frank, he had reached a condition such that he could not have solved the simplest riddle in the world, even if he had heard it before.

One day Florence came home from her enforced stroll in the village with the information that she had encountered one of the wisest men she had ever met, a quaint old philosopher such as one encounters now and then in the pages of fiction. It appeared that his name was Abner Morey, whereas Mr. Weld and Aunt Mary were moved to laughter, for Morey was a familiar character, one of those amusing imbeciles found in every village.

"I don't care if he is half-witted," protested Florence. "He is a genuine philosopher. I talked with him about the valentine. 'I bet ye,' he said, 'that if I knew the man that made it I could give a guess at what it means. Everything a man does is just himself over again. I bet ye he's hid himself over the same way. Study the man,' said Mr. Morey. 'He's back of the riddle.'"

"I've been thinking and thinking about that," continued Florence. "What would your father have been likely to do? Did you ever know him to hide anything else?"

Frank smiled wearily. "I remember his hiding a thimble once for some children in a house we visited," he said. "He told us to blind our eyes, and then he tipped over to a big whatnot in a corner. Of course we all pecked, and when he had returned to his chair we nearly pulled the whatnot to pieces, but the thimble was on the arm of my father's chair. He had attracted our attention to the whatnot on purpose, knowing that we'd peck."

"Perhaps he's done the same thing here!" exclaimed Florence. "Perhaps the money is not in that house."

"I've searched this one," replied Uncle William, "and he didn't go anywhere else. Why, Frank, what's the matter?"

The young man was standing rigid as a statue and pale as paper. "Wait, wait!" he gasped. "Don't disturb me!"

He turned and fell into a chair beside the desk at which he has been working. The others would have approached, but he waved them back. Minutes passed. The old clock in the corner ticked as if it would burst. Suddenly Frank rose.

"Uncle," he cried hoarsely, "is there an old writing table in your barn?"

"Why—why, yes," stammered Uncle William. "There's been some old furniture stowed away in the north corner of the loft for twenty years. But why—"

Frank sprang across the room almost in one bound. The others followed him, but he distanced them. They heard him shouting in the loft when they reached the barn.

"It's here! It's here!" he cried. And the next instant he sprang from the loft to the floor, a feat he would not have relished in a calmer moment.

"The money was in his hands. 'Study the man!' he exclaimed. 'Florence, you and your philosopher have saved us. It was just like the thimble.'"

"But how did you know it was here?"

"The question came from all three. 'It's the cipher that's like the thimble,' he replied. 'It's not where my father seemed to put it. It's in the note, not in the valentine. Read every third word: 'Your money in writing desk; Uncle's barn. Cipher tells place. Trick used before.' Those last two sentences read either way. They were merely to let her know there was a cipher. She knew enough not to look where he said it was. Dear old dad! And to think I didn't know him well enough! The man is back of the riddle in every problem of life. Oh, won't I make this right with your friend Mr. Morey!"

REVOLUTIONARY ARMY FIFTY PER CENT. IRISH.

The New York Sun of Sunday last devoted several columns to a review of "The Scotch-Irish in America," a two volumes collectively comprising some twelve hundred pages, compiled by Mr. Charles A. Hanna and published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. The most comprehensive work on "The Scotch-Irish that has ever seen the light," says The Sun.

The reviewer devotes considerable space to a study of the testimony given before a committee of the House of Commons in March, 1799, by Joseph Galloway.

"This testimony, first printed in London in the year named and republished in Philadelphia in 1855, will be found literally reproduced in the book before us. It is well known that Joseph Galloway was a Tory, or, as he would have preferred to be called, a Loyalist. He was native-born American, and at the time when he gave his testimony was a little more than forty-eight years old. He had lived, as he told the committee, in the Province of Maryland, in the Delaware counties, and in the Province of Pennsylvania, chiefly in Philadelphia. A lawyer by profession he had practiced in all the courts of Pennsylvania, in those of the Delaware counties and in the Supreme Court of New Jersey. He had been a member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania for eighteen years and

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Speaker of the House for twelve. He had been appointed by the Pennsylvania Assembly to attend the Continental Congress which met in September, 1771. During the French and Indian War he had been appointed by the same Assembly one of the commissioners for disposing of the money granted to the Crown, and he had been several times a commissioner to treat with the Indians. When Sir William Howe took possession of Philadelphia, Joseph Galloway, at his request, undertook the office of Superintendent of Police of the city and its suburbs.

"Now, let us mark the grounds on which Mr. Galloway must be deemed an especially competent witness as to the nationality of the rebel soldiers. This question was put to him: 'Were deserters from the rebel army frequent while Sir William Howe was in Philadelphia?' The witness replied: 'They were frequent—almost daily. I have known forty-nine to come in in a day—many days from ten to fifteen.' Mr. Galloway was next asked: 'What number do you suppose came into the army at Philadelphia?' He answered: 'The deserters were generally sent from headquarters down to me for examination; from me they went to Mr. Story, the officer appointed to administer the oath of allegiance. He kept a regular account of their numbers, their names and the places of their nativity, and I think there were upwards of 3,300 qualified at his office, and I believe on good reason there might have been upward of 700 or 800 more not qualified; for I often found on seeing him in the evening, that the number I had sent down to him had not gone so, that I suppose at least 3,000 came in.' Then came the interesting inquiry: 'That part of the rebel army that enlisted in the service of the Congress (i. e., the Continental Army), were they chiefly composed of natives of America, or were the greater part of them English, Scotch and Irish?' Mr. Galloway answered: 'The names and places of their nativity being taken down, I can answer the question with precision. There were scarcely one-fourth natives of America; about one-half Irish; the other fourth were English and Scotch.'

"I've been thinking and thinking about that," continued Florence. "What would your father have been likely to do? Did you ever know him to hide anything else?"

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THE MARKET REPORTS.

Wheat in Eastern—The Live Stock Trade—Latest quotations.
Tuesday Evening, March 25.
Toronto St. Lawrence Market.

The grain receipts were heavy on the street market this morning, 1,000 bushels of wheat, 500 of barley and 500 of oats. Wheat—Was steady, 300 bush of white selling at 70c to 80c per bush, 100 bush of 70c per bush, 500 bush of 60c to 65c per bush and 100 bush of spring at 60c per bush. Oats—Were steady, 100 bush of feed selling at 40c to 50c per bush. Barley—Was steady, 300 bush selling at 40c to 50c per bush. Hay—Was steady, 100 tons selling at \$11 to \$12 per ton for timothy and \$7 to \$9 per ton for clover. Straw—Was steady, two loads selling at \$7 to \$8 per ton. Chickens—Are in good demand, and there were large receipts on the market this morning. Prices were strong, ranging from 70c to \$1 per pair.

Toronto Live Stock.

There was a good strong trade this morning at the Toronto Cattle Market. The demand was good for export cattle and butchers' cattle. The offerings, however, were quite two thirds of exporters, and the butchers' cattle offered were not so good in quality as they were last week. In spite of this, however, the prices were strong. Exporters were scarce and the demand was strong. The prices were steady. Sheep were a little easier, selling at 25c per cwt for choice, and 20c per cwt for medium and 15c per cwt for poor. Hogs—Were steady, selling at \$3.50 to \$4.00 per cwt for choice, and \$3.00 to \$3.50 per cwt for medium and \$2.50 to \$3.00 per cwt for poor.

ABOUT TEMPER.

There are three reasons why one ought to control his temper, and the first is self-respect. When one loses command of himself and throws the reins upon the neck of passion, he may have for the moment a certain enjoyment in the licence, but there surely must come a reaction of regret. When he is calm again and the fit has passed away, every serious person must be ashamed of what he said and what he did, of the manner in which he gave himself away and the exhibition he made of himself. He will recall the amazement on the faces of his friends and the silence which they adopted as a protective measure, and the soothing language which they used, as if they were speaking with a baby, and the glances which passed between them. He will not soon again hold with them as strong as he did before this outburst, nor will he have the same claim upon their confidence as a sound and clear-headed man. He has acted like a fretful, peevish child, and has for the time forfeited his title to mabhood and the place of a man.

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SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned and enclosed "Tenders for Indian Supplies" will be received at this office up to noon on Monday, 14th April, 1902, for the delivery of Indian Supplies during the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1903, at various points in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.

Form of tender containing full particulars may be had by applying to the undersigned, or to the Indian Commissioner at Winnipeg. The lowest of any tender not necessarily accepted.

J. D. McLEAN,
Secretary

Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, 28th February, 1902.

N.B.—Newspapers inserting this advertisement without the authority of the Department will not be paid.

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