The Lost Cipher.

By STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

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I remembered where I had seen spots of blood before—on the papers I had handed to Ferret—and remembered, too, where that blood had come from. I looked at the cut now, and, finding it nearly healed, sprang in my saddle. Of a certainty this paper had gone through my hands that day! It had been among the others; therefore it must have been passed to Ferret inside another when I first opened the bag! The rogue, getting it and seeing his opportunity, and that I did not suspect, had doubtless secreted it, probably while I was attending to my hand.

I had not suspected him before, because I had ticked off the earlier papers as I handed them to him; and had searched only among the rest and in the bag for the missing one. Now I wondered that I had not done so, and seen the truth from the beginning; and in my impatience I found the leagues through the forest, though the sun was not yet high and the trees sheltered us, the longest I had ridden in my life. While the roofs of the chateau at length appeared before us, I could scarcely keep my pace within bounds. Reflecting how Mme. de Verneuil had overreached herself, and how, by indulging in that last stroke of arrogance, she had placed the secret in my hands, I had much ado to refrain from going to the king booted and unwashed as I was, and though I had not eaten since the previous evening.

However, the habit of propriety, which no man may lightly neglect, came to my aid. I made my toilet, and having broken my fast standing, hastened to the court. On the way I learned that the king was in the queen's garden, and, directing my steps thither, found him walking mith my colleagues, Villeroy and Sillery, in the little avenue which leads to the garden of the Conciergerie. A number of the courtiers were standing on the low terrace watching them, while a second group lounged about the queen's staircase. Full of the news which I had for the king, I crossed the terrace, taking no particular heed of anyone, but greeting such as came in my way in my usual fashion. At the edge of the terrace I paused a moment before descending the three steps; and at the same moment, as it happened, Henry looked up and our eyes met. On the instant he averted his gaze, and, turning on his heel in a marked way, retired slowly to the farther end of the walk.

The action was so deliberate that I could not doubt he meant to slight me; and I paused where I was, divided between grief and indignation, a mark for all those glances and whispered gibes in which courtiers indulge on such occasions. The slight was not rendered less serious by the fact that the king was walking with my two colleagues; so that I alone seemed to be out of his confidence, as one soon to be out of his councils also.

I perceived all this, and was not blind to the sneering smiles which were exchanged behind my back; but I affected to see nothing, and to be absorbed in sudden thought. In a minute or two the king turned and came back toward me; again, as if he could not restrain his curiosity, looked up so that our eyes met. This time I thought that he would beckon me to him, satisfied with the lengths to which he had already carried his displeasure. But he turned again, with a light laugh.

Our Eyes Met.

At this a courtier, one of Sillery's creatures, who had presumed on the occasion so far as to come to my elbow, thought that he might safely amuse himself with me. "I am afraid that the king grows older, M. de Rosny," he said, smirking at his companions. "His sight seems to be failing."

"It should not be neglected, then," I said, grimly. "I will tell him presently what you say."

He fell back, looking foolish at that, at the very moment that Henry, having taken another turn, dismissed Villeroy, who, wiser than the puppy at my elbow, greeted me with particular civility as he passed. Freed from him, Henry stood a moment hesitating. He told me afterward that he had not turned from me a yard before his heart smote him; and that but for a mischievous curiosity to see how I should take it, he would not have carried the matter so far. Be that as it may—and I do not doubt this any more than I ever doubted the reality of the affection in which he held me—on a sudden he raised his hand and beckoned to me.

I went down to him gravely, and not hurriedly. He looked at me with some signs of confusion in his face. "You are late this morning," he said.

"I have been on your majesty's business," I answered.

"I do not doubt that," he replied, querulously, his eyes wandering. "I am not—I am troubled this morning." And after a fashion he had when he was not at his ease, he ground his heel into the soil and looked down at the mark. "The queen is not well. Sillery has seen her, and will tell you so."

M. de Sillery, whose constant opposition to me at the council board I have elsewhere described, began to affirm it. I let him go on for a little time and then interrupted him brusquely. "I think it was you," I said, "who nominated Ferret to be one of the king's clerks."

"Ferret?" he exclaimed, reddening at my tone, while the king, who knew me well, pricked up his ears.

"Yes," I said: "Ferret."

"And if so?" Sillery asked, haughtily. "What do you mean?"

"Only this," I said. "That if his majesty will summon him to the queen's closet, without warning or delay, and ask him in her presence how much Mme. de Verneuil gave him for the king's cipher, her majesty, I think, will learn something which she wishes to know."

"What?" the king cried. "You have discovered it? But he gave you a receipt for the papers he took."

"For the papers he took with my knowledge—yes, sire."

"The rogue!" Sillery exclaimed viciously. "I will go and fetch him."

"Not so—with your majesty's leave," I said, interposing quickly. "M. de Sillery may say too much or too little.

"What!" the King Cried, "You Have Discovered It."

Let a lackey take a message, bidding him to go to the queen's closet, and he will suspect nothing."

The king assented and bade me go and give the order. When I returned, he asked me anxiously if I felt sure that the man would confess.

"Yes, if you pretend to know all, sire," I answered. "He will think that madame has betrayed him."

"Very well," Henry said. "Then let us go."

But I declined to be present; partly on the ground that if I were there the queen might suspect me of inspiring the man, and partly because I thought that the rogue would entertain a more confident hope of pardon, and be more likely to confess, if he saw the king alone. I contrived to keep Sillery also; and Henry giving the word, as he mounted the steps, that he should be back presently, the whole court remained in a state of suspense, aware that something was in progress but in doubt what, and unable to decide whether I were again in favor or now on trial.

Sillery remained talking to me, principally on English matters, until the dinner hour; which came and went, neglected by all. At length, when the curiosity of the mass of courtiers, who did not dare to interrupt us, had been raised by delay to an almost intolerable pitch, the king returned, with signs of disorder in his bearing; and, crossing the terrace in half a dozen strides, drew me hastily, along with Sillery, into the grove of white mulberry trees. There we were no sooner hidden in part, though not completely, then he threw his arms about me and embraced me with the warmest expression. "Ah, my friend," he said, putting me from him at last, "what shall I say to you?"

"The queen is satisfied, sire?"

"Perfectly; and desires to be commended to you."

"He confessed, then?"

Henry nodded, with a look in his face that I did not understand. "Yes," he said, "fully. It was as you thought, my friend. God have mercy upon him!"

I started. "What?" I said. "Has he—"

The king nodded, and could not repress a shudder. "Yes," he said; "but not, thank heaven, until he had left the closet. He had something about him."

Sillery began anxiously to clear himself; but the king, with his usual good nature, stopped him, and bade us all go and dine, saying that we must be famished. He ended by directing me to be back in an hour, since his own appetite was spoiled. "And bring with you all your patience," he added, "for I will show you the surprise which I am preparing for the queen."

Alas, I would I could say that all ended there. But the rancour of which Mme. de Verneuil had given token in her interview with me was rather aggravated than lessened by the failure of her plot and the death of her tool. It proved to be impenetrable by all the kindness which the king lavished upon her; nor her the legitimation of the child which she soon afterward bore, nor the clemency which the king—against the advice of his wisest ministers—extended to her brother, Auvergne, availing to expel it from her breast. How far she or that ill-omented family were privy to the accursed crime which, nine years later, palsied France on the threshold of undreamed-of glories, I will not take on myself to say; for suspicion is not proof. But history, of which my beloved master must ever form so great a part, will lay the blame where it should rest.

(The End.)

A Valuable Testimonial.

From Puck.

Eminent but baldheaded citizen—Well, sir, what can I do for you?

Visitor—You can do me a great favor, with no trouble to yourself. Will you kindly sign this certificate for my hair restorer?

Eminent citizen—Hair restorer! But, my dear sir, I have never used your hair restorer?

Visitor—Of course not! That is exactly what I wish you to certify.

OLD-FASHIONED ROSES.

They ain't no style about 'em,
And they're sort o' pale and faded;
Yit the doorway here without 'em
Would be lonesomer and shaded
With a good 'eal blacker shadder
Than the mornin' glories makes,
And the sunshine would look sadder
For their good, old-fashioned sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kind 'o
Sort o' make a feller like 'em;
And I tell you, when I find a
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,
It allus sets me thinkin'
O' the ones 'at used to grow,
And peek in tro' the chinkin'
O' the cabin, don't you know?

And then I think o' mother,
And how she used to love 'em,
When they wuzn't any other
'Less they found 'em up above 'em!
And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,
Whispered with a smile, and said,
We must pluck a bunch and put 'em
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz sayin',
They ain't no style about 'em
Very gaudy or displayin',
But I wouldn't be without 'em,
'Cause I'm happier in these posies
And the hollyhawks and sich
Than the hummin' bird 'at noses
In the roses o' the rich.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

Where King Arthur Held High Revel

Miss Kaiser Visits Caerleon, the Site of the Round Table.

QUEEN GUINEVERE'S TURRET

It Was Here That Tennyson Wrote the Idyls of the King—Plunkett Greene's Fine Basso Singing—Other Musical Topics.

Special Correspondence of The Tribune.

London, Jan. 5.—I am in London town again ready for the fray. I had most delightful holidays, during which I saw many beautiful and interesting sights. One of them, however, I forgot to mention, but which certainly deserves a word or two, was the little old village Caerleon, near Newport—genuine old ruined town, the remains of what was once a flourishing Roman colony. It is doubly interesting, also, because it is the very place where the famous King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table used to assemble and hold their feasts and banquets in ye olden time.

The round Table, or what remains of it, rather, was pointed out to me, and of course I looked upon it with a great deal of interest. It is in a great field, and is a round and rather shallow depression in the ground, in the center and bottom of which, the "knights so bold, in days of old," used to roast their game and meats, while I suppose they all sat around in a circle, at the top of this bowl-shaped plane, and talked of the great feats of skill and daring which they had accomplished in chase and battle during the day. It was quite a revelation to me, for I had had only vague ideas of what King Arthur's Round Table really was like. The time of this doughty old king was after that of the Romans, I believe, but traces of his foreign predecessors such as an old Roman aqueduct, various Roman spears, and pieces of armor, still remain to prove the antiquity of this spot. The different old urns, images, helmets, axes, spears, and armor—all Roman—which have been dug up out of the very ground where they have laid for ages and ages past, are all kept on exhibition in a tiny little museum which has been erected and devoted to the preservation of the antiquities of the place; and on the stones of the courtyard and the old castle there, where the moss has been scraped away from the stones, one can see the marks of the second legion of Augustus, during whose reign the Roman occupation of the place lasted.

Queen Guinevere's Turret.

Driven out by the Saxons shortly after this, we see no further traces of them, and the interest becomes, with the people, Saxon. So I was next shown the turret in the old castle where the wicked Queen Guinevere, once upon a time, sat and watched the bridal procession of Enid winding its way across the very meadows which lay before me. I looked out of the hole in the crumbling wall, way across the lovely green fields and almost fancied I saw the little pageant approaching again, as in the days of old King Arthur. It all seemed to be true and real again, and I did not want to go away from the place at all, but wished again to go over this tiny village looking at all the interesting old things; but time was limited, and so was the patience of my friends, and I finished the little tour by being shown the very house, a little inn called the Hanbury Arms, where the dear old poet, Tennyson, came and wrote the "Idyls of the King," "Passing of Arthur," and other poems, descriptive of the same themes. The very table at which he wrote, and the very chair which he occupied, are there in state, in the little parlor of the inn, and I dare say, will come to be quite as interesting to the tourist as the historic place itself.

There was a concert given on New Year's Eve, at Newport, at which I had the pleasure of assisting, and I must say I was most delightfully welcomed again by the people of that town. They were so good to me that I almost fancy they meant some of my applause for some of the other members of the company with which I sang when I first saw Newport a few months ago. It was there that we gave our farewell concert, you remember, the pleasant memories of which are still fresh in the minds of the people of Newport, and many were the inquiries I had as to how the others were, and where they were, and so forth. The concert was all very well done, as it should be, as a matter of course, being managed by the Misses Driscoll, who were my hostesses. The praises sung after the affair was over were both loud and long, and my dear friends realized quite a large sum of money for the Infirmary, of which institution Miss Driscoll is one of the lady guardians.

Viewing a Winter Palace.

This afternoon I went to a private view, given to the representatives of the press, of a big winter palace, called the "Niagara," which was favorably opened yesterday and today. A big dinner last night at Hotel Savoy opened the formalities, and today, at three, the place itself was thrown open to pressmen and pressowners, who were shown over the place at their leisure. It is a beautiful thing, but I cannot describe it, I am afraid, as its beauties would fill quite too much space.

But just a word or two, please. Entering the outer court, and in which there is a great organ playing, and palms and flowers all around, we passed under an archway into the Niagara proper, which is an immense circular hall, with the walls all around simulating the scenery about our Niagara, in winter, and the great falls seem to tumble down into the floor of the palace, which is frozen by that compressed ammonia gas process, you know, and around this big frozen surface run nice warm balconies, with chairs and teatables, and palms scattered about. It is a beautiful place, just like fairyland. The snow looks so real and the electric lights twinkle and shine on the ice so prettily, and the orchestra plays and makes one feel so buoyant. I told my friends, who asked about it, that it was a very fine representation of the cataract.

We went from the cold place down to a very dainty luncheon, and from there up to the snowy place again, where several very fine skaters were giving an exhibiton on the ice. Soon a great many other people came in, and the ice was shortly after a most beautiful spectacle to look, upon, with the many skaters upon it. You see it is the first artificial ice concern upon the scene in London, and the magnitude of the undertaking, together with the magnificent scale on which it is done, has attracted widespread interest. It has over 22,000 square feet of ice, I am told, and may be skated upon for the sum of five shillings—$1.25—which is rather expensive for a skate. However, it is intended only for the swells, who can afford that much, and it certainly is worth even more to see the lovely skating and the beautiful decorations of this delightfully arranged winter palace. There are skate rooms, resting rooms, cloak rooms, lunch rooms, and such luxuries all about, and it is really the most delightful place I have ever seen.

Knighting a Great Musician.

I suppose you know already, by means of the cable, that the president of our college, Dr. Mackenzie, was knighted by her Majesty on New Year's Day, so now he is Sir Alexander Mackenzie; but we aren't any prouder of him for it. We couldn't be. But honor where honor is due; and if he didn't deserve the honor, after all that he has done for music in England, I am sure we don't know who did. All the students are very proud indeed of him; so is all the United Kingdom, for that matter.

Jan. 11.—This afternoon I had the great pleasure of listening to the famous Irish basso, Plunkett Greene, at a song and piano recital given by himself and Leonard Bostwick, at St. James' Hall, down on Piccadilly. We had stalls, and consequently felt very grand, and I enjoyed it all so much that I just sat there and heaved great big sighs of delight all afternoon. Plunkett Greene is a most lovely artist. I never was so charmed with a singer in all my life. He is a very fine looking man, tall, and possessed of a handsome Irish face which stands him in good stead in his works. I am rather afraid he rather takes people's hearts by storm, with his magnificent voice, his handsome face and easy graceful manner. He mounts the stage, talking the while most unconcernedly with the accompanist, while the showers of applause come pattering down upon him, when he turns, bowing to the audience with such a good-humored, hale-and-hearty and happy-go-lucky expression on his face, just as if he were saying, "Well, here I am again, and I know you're right glad to see me, too; aren't you, now?" I actually was moved to laugh with very delight at the artist's move more than once during the afternoon.

Plunkett Greene's Singing.

He sang sixteen of Schumann's songs for one of his numbers on the programme. They were beautiful. He sang five more at his other appearance, one of them being a little Greek melody, sung in modern Greek, too, which was the first time I had heard one sung in that language. It sang very well, and seemed quite an euphonious little bit. Barwick, a remarkably clever young man, and a pupil of Clara Schuman at Frankfort, is very fine at the piano, and I enjoyed his work extremely. But I shall never forget this charming basso. They are to tour in the United States soon, I am given to understand, and how I wish I could be there to hear him again, for I suppose he will sing in Scranton or Wilkes-Barre.

On Monday night we are going to Daly's, down on Leicester Square, to hear the little fairy opera which has been making such a hubbub in musical circles—Humperdinck's, you know. It is tremenduously talked about, and I know I shall enjoy it.

Sadie E. Kaiser.

WELSH JOTTINGS.

Three Welsh bards, hailing originally from Brynaman, died last year in the United States, viz., Gwalch Ebrill, Tegynys, and Meurig Aman.

Rev. W. Gibbon, of Swansea, received a welcome new year's gift from America. It was a postoffice order for £5, which a few Welshmen in Scranton had subscribed for the relief of Rev. R. Richards, an Independent minister, formerly of Pennsylvania, who has in his old age fallen upon evil times, and is now resident at Swansea.

Talley, the historic village of the lakes, produced early in this century three bards of considerable merit—Thomas Lewis ("Y Gof"), Dewi Dawel Cwmdu, and John Thomas, Cwmsidan. A movement has been initiated to celebrate the memory of the author of "Wrth gofio'd ruddfanau'n yr ardd" by setting up a monolith in Esgairnant Calvinistic Methodist chapel, of which he was one of the founders.

The "Forward Movement" of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists has twenty missions under its care, comprising 6,230 hearers, 1,229 members, and 2,311 scholars. An appeal is being made for £2,000 to help to carry on the work.

At the Bala Methodist college two scholarships of the yearly value of £10 each are given by Herbert Lewis, M. P., and Herbert Roberts, M. P. It is regretted that other wealthy Welsh members of parliament do not follow their example.

An American visitor to South Wales has paid a visit to Miss Margaret Adams, Dolewyddon, Felindre, Llandyssul, who appeared in Welsh costume in the World's fair at Chicago, and who has since figured in Dr. Gomer Lewis' 150 lectures. The Yankee found Miss Adams full of "American spirit."

The five counties of Wales which are overwhelmingly Welsh, says Tom Ellis, are Anglesey, Carnarvon, Cardigan, Merioneth and Carmarthen.

There are no less than three pairs of brothers in the Welsh University court, namely: Revs. Dr. T. C. and Llewelyn Edwards, Principal Viriamu Jones and Brynmor Jones, Q. C. and O. M. and Edward Edwards. The following theological colleges have members of the teaching staff in the court: Bala (2), Bala-Bangor (Congregationalist), Bangor (Baptist), Cardiff (Baptist), and Trefecca (Calvinistic Methodist.)

The "Welsh Lourdes" is beginning to heal South Wallans. A young man named James Randel, of Coychurch, near Bridgend, is the last of the cured. Randel was paralyzed on the right side when he was 12 years old, and remained in that state till a few days ago. Some little time ago he was taken to Holywell, and after bathing twice in the well a wonderful improvement is said to have been made in his condition, and he has recovered almost completely the use of his limbs. Randel is a Protestant.

"Arvonwyson" was the name of a young Welshman who attained great fame as an astronomer. He was born in Carnarvonshire in 1805, and wes entirely self-taught. When he was 10 years old he was sent to work at the quarries, and he only attended school in his leisure moments. He took to astronomy naturally, and his description of the appearance of a comet—before it was due—was so accurate that it attracted the notice of Professor Airey, of the Greenwich observatory, who offered him a situation. The young quarryman soon worked his way up to be second only to Professor Airey, but died in 1840 in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

Mrs. Gwen Davies, who had reached the age of nearly 101 years, died at the home of her son-in-law, Edward Lewis, 738 East One Hundred and Thirty-eighth street, New York city, a few days ago. Mrs. Davies was born on a farm that is now covered by Lake Vyrnwy, the water reservoir for the city of Liverpool. The lake is in Montgomeryshire, North Wales, and under its dammed up waters rest the bones of her ancestors, for her fathers were good old farmers of the ancient type, and when the valley was dammed the old graveyard was covered over and was soon lost to sight under the accumulating waters. She was the daughter of Evan Davies and Ann Jones, and was born on Feb. 22, 1794. When 23 years old she married another Davies. She had twelve children, of whom nine are still alive, and she has a regiment of grand and great grandchildren. Her death was just the dying out of a life that had done its duty, and up to the last the old dame was perfectly conscious. Though she had been in this country for fifty years she spoke hardly any English, being most conservative in holding to the old Cymric tongue. Despite her old age, she had not failed in any of her faculties, and her sight was as good as that of a girl of eighteen years. She could remember when naughty children were frightened by the threat that "Boney" would come and take them off to France. She used to tell of the rejoicings over the battles of Waterloo and Trafalgar, and the triumphal return of the Twenty-third Royal Welsh Fusiliers, of the days of the Regency, of the death of King George III, William IV's short reign and the accession of the present Queen. She was a member of the Welsh Presbyterian church, in East Thirteenth street, New York, and was the oldest life member of the Bible society.

"Hoodlum."

From Notes and Queries.

I frequently hear "soodlum" and "soodles" applied to dawdling, unthrifty, loafing fellows, although I never heard they were so called after a leader named Sood. It seems to me this is one of the fanciful derivations so detested by Professor Skeat. My own impression is that "soodlum" and "hoodlum" are mere variations of "noodles" and "noodium." The great unwashed are rather given to such play on words.

A Collegee Cry.

"Chic-a-go-runk! go-runk! go-runk! ha, ho, hi, ho!" sounds somewhat like an Indian war whoop, but it is only a part of the Washington and Lee college cheer.

Looked Like It.

Hour after hour beguiled,
Till her father oft obdurate stulled
With much justice no doubt,
Came and kicked the youth oubt
In a way that proclaimed he was rulled.

—Detroit Tribune.

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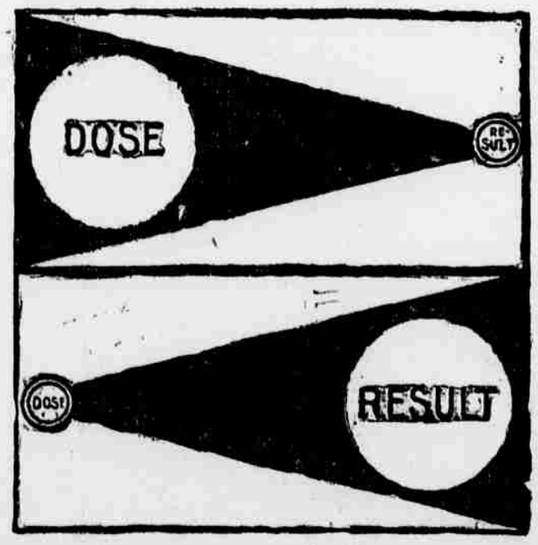

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