

A Letter That Came a Day Too Late

By MAY C. ETHERIDGE

Edwin Marmaduke at his death left a large estate. He was a widower with no children, at least no children at home. But no one seemed to know much about him, and, being a reticent man, he kept his past history to himself.

Marmaduke had lived alone in a big house which he had occupied when his wife was living. When he died a nephew who had an eye to his estate went to his house and looked for a will. He found none. This gave the inheritance to the heirs-at-law. The nephew, John Williams, hunted up these persons and found a large number of them. But they were all descendants of the deceased's brothers and sisters, none of whom could claim descent from him directly.

Williams called a meeting of Marmaduke's relatives and told them that unless they took concerted action in the matter the estate was liable to be wasted in chancery. A great many claims might be made by persons who would try to prove falsely that they were related to the deceased. Some of these claims might be allowed, and money might be wasted by the court in disproving others. Of course the matter of the distribution was in the hands of the court, but the heirs would facilitate matters and save wastage by acting together so as to secure a proper distribution of the property.

Among those who attended the meeting was a young girl of sixteen. She took a back seat and listened to what was said without remark, being the only one present who said nothing. She was very poorly dressed and had a hungry look. When those present were requested to step forward and put their names on paper, giving their relationship to the deceased, this girl knug back. Williams, seeing her, asked her if she had any claim on the Marmaduke estate. In reply she said that she had recently arrived in the city from Canada, where she had been discharged from a foundling asylum.

At leaving she had been given the baby clothes she had on when left at the asylum and a letter addressed to Edwin Marmaduke. She had been given money by a director of the institution to go and deliver the letter. On arriving she had inquired where Edwin Marmaduke lived and on reaching the house had found craps on the door. Persons to whom she had told her story informed her of the meeting of the heirs-at-law to Mr. Marmaduke's estate and suggested that she might find out something concerning her mission from some of them.

Williams asked the girl why she did not open the letter, and she replied that it was stated on the envelope that it was to be opened by Edwin Marmaduke and by no other person.

A young man who signed his name Steven Marmaduke and claimed to be a grand-nephew of the deceased noticed the girl and pitied her. She had signed no name on the list of relatives, but for information. When the meeting adjourned young Marmaduke joined the girl and asked her if he could do anything for her. She thanked him and said that since the person she had come to see was dead she would return to the place from which she had come. He asked her name, and she said she had no name. At the foundlings' home she had been called Ruth, but this had been changed there to distinguish her from the other orphans.

Steven Marmaduke was much impressed by the story of the girl who had been born into the world under such unfortunate circumstances. He went with her to the house where she was staying, asking her to tell him more about herself. What could she tell? The letter she bore to one who was dead and her baby clothes were all the evidence there was as to her identity. When she had been left at the foundlings' home, whoever had received her had wrapped the letter in the clothes, and there it had remained ever since. On the envelope was written "To be delivered when the child is old enough to act for herself."

Steven Marmaduke advised the girl to open the letter, and she did so in his presence. It read:

Father—For the love you bore me when I was a child, like my child who may some day hand you this, help her, for she is of your own blood. Henry is dead, and my days are numbered. Your daughter, KATE.

When Marmaduke read this letter he turned to the girl with wonder in his eyes and said:

"Rejoice, little one, for you are heiress to a princely estate. Guard well this letter and any other evidence you may have as to your identity." An investigation proved that the girl was Alice Marmaduke Spencer. Her mother had married in opposition to her father's express command, and he had never forgiven her. Poverty and sickness had come to her and her husband, and just before her death she had sent her child to the foundlings' home.

Learning of his daughter's death, Edwin Marmaduke had endeavored to find her child, but had failed. He had never made a will, hoping that his granddaughter might be found. She had come too late to give the old man an opportunity to benefit her while he lived, but his fortune was ready for her before he was laid in the grave.

Alice Spencer married Steven Marmaduke, and the family name was restored in their children.

BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

What It Once Was and What It May Become in the Future.

Few people in viewing the bay of San Francisco think of it as other than a magnificent landlocked harbor about which has grown the commercial metropolis of the Pacific coast of the United States.

Yet this harbor did not always exist, according to a report on the geology of the region published by the United States geological survey, for at one time through the depression now occupied by the bay ran a great river that drained the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

This river probably flowed between the Tiburon peninsula and Angel Island and then through the gorge of the Golden Gate, where at present the greatest depth of water is over 400 feet. After the river valley was formed the coast slowly sank, and the ocean entered through the Golden Gate, flooding the valley and forming the present bay.

Thus the valley occupied by the bay is really not so very different from Santa Clara and Santa Rosa valleys, and should the Pacific coast sink a few hundred feet lower those fertile valleys would form great additions to the present bay.

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How She Made Him Pay

By EUNICE BLAKE

A young lady driving an automobile was about to turn a corner. Another car was coming from the opposite direction. The girl had lost her head and instead of turning to the right made a short cut to the left to give the other more room. The result was a crash.

The girl's auto was a light one, the other heavy and strong. Consequently the light machine was smashed and the girl thrown out. A young man who was driving the machine that had done the damage jumped from his car and picked the girl up.

"Are you much hurt?"

"I don't know." Then seeing the remains of her wrecked machine she collapsed in the young man's arms. He carried her to his auto, put her on a rear seat and, not knowing what else to do, took off his hat and fanned her with it. Presently she opened her eyes and again they fell on the heap of junk that had a few moments before been a new runabout.

"I'll make you pay for this," she cried viciously, tears starting to her eyes.

"You won't have to make me pay; I'll be only too glad to pay you for your machine. I only hope you are not injured yourself!"

"Papa gave it to me only yesterday. My dear young lady, never mind your car. Tell me how you feel."

"I feel as if I were going to faint."

And she did. The young man got into the car and propped her up until she came to herself again.

Fortunately they were in an unfrequented place, and no crowd gathered. The young man did not therefore scruple to let the girl fall on his shoulder, and in order to keep her from falling over he was necessary to put his arms about her. He dreaded lest his should never come to her senses, and if she did she would catch sight of her wrecked gift again and suffer another collapse. He pined himself, so far as he could, between her eyes and the wreck. He was very much rattled, scarcely knowing what he did. Whether it was because he had lost his head, this, according to Mr. Rib-ard, being the economical reason for her, he kissed her.

It may or may not have served the purpose. At any rate, soon after the application of the remedy she was herself again.

"Can't you manage to keep a grip on yourself while I take you somewhere?" she moaned.

"To a drug store or a—"

She had caught sight of the wreck and was off again, though this time not in a faint.

"Just think of my wrecking my beautiful car the very first time I went out in it!"

"Confound the—I mean we can't stay here. I must take you where you can have attention."

By this time she had come to a realization that something had happened to herself as well as her car. With a woman's instinct she first put her hand to her back hair, to find that it had been disarranged by her fall. Clutching some hairpins that were sliding out of the coil, she jabbed them into different places. Then she seemed to be bracing herself against some internal pain. She tried to speak, but seemed unable to do so, but the young man put his ear near her lips, and she said faintly:

"Where am I?" It seemed to the young man that it was time to assert himself or the girl would die on his hands. Putting her in a corner so that she would be less likely to fall, he seated himself in front behind the wheel and was about to start for somewhere when she sat up straight and ordered him to stop.

"What is it?" he asked anxiously.

"Do you suppose I'm going to leave my car here in the road like that?"

It was a question of getting her where he might throw off this terrible responsibility. He started up again without reply. A hysterical person needs the inevitable, and his act was the best thing he could have done. The girl submitted without another word about the wrecked car.

"Take me home," she said.

"Where is your home?"

She gave her address, and in ten minutes they drew up at the door. Before the young man could alight to help her she had jumped from the car, run up the steps and into the house slamming the door behind her. The young man followed, rang the bell and was received by the girl's mother, to whom he told the story of the mishap in words and manner that despite the seriousness of the matter caused a smile to play about the lady's lips.

"I'll see if she is much hurt," she said, "and let you know in a few minutes."

When the lady returned she reported that her daughter did not seem to be at all injured, and the young man departed. Within an hour he drove up to the house again with a new car, an exact duplicate of the one that had been wrecked.

He found the young lady's father at home and offered the new car, with regrets for the accident, but the gentleman said that his daughter was to blame for having turned to the left instead of the right and declined to permit her to accept the machine.

A year later the young lady verified her threat in saying, "I'll make you pay for this." She married him.

TRICKS OF LIGHTNING.

A Favorite Prank Seems to Be to Strip Its Victim Naked.

The antics played by lightning are sometimes almost beyond belief. A common trick is that of undressing its victims. In 1893 two girls and an elderly woman were standing by a reaping machine during a storm. A lightning flash struck the woman and killed her on the spot, while the two girls were stripped to the skin, even their boots being torn from their feet; otherwise they were safe and sound, but astonished.

In 1855 a man was struck by lightning near Valerols, in France, and stripped naked. All that could be found afterward of his clothes was a shirt sleeve, a few other shreds and some pieces of his hobnailed boots. Ten minutes after he was struck he regained consciousness, opened his eyes, complained of the cold and inquired how he happened to be naked.

Such instances have been recorded again and again. In one case a man and two oxen were struck simultaneously, and all three killed. The man was found stripped to the skin, and his boots had been carried thirty yards away.

"In other cases," says Camille Flammarion, the eminent French astronomer, "lightning has been known to split men in half, almost as with a huge ax. On June 20, 1898, this happened to a miller's assistant at a windmill near Croix. The lightning struck him and split him from his head downward in two."—Pearson's Weekly.

COTTON THREAD.

Its Invention Was a Case of Necessity Caused by War.

Curiously enough, it was a war that brought about the revolution in the manufacture of sewing thread. When Napoleon occupied north Germany in 1803 the supply of silk from Hamburg, which was used in making heddles, or the loom harness, in Paisley, was cut off.

Unless some substitute could be found the weaving industry of Paisley would be ruined. Peter Clark experimented with cotton warp yarn and succeeded in making thread like the five cord sewing thread used today. It took the place of silk in the heddles, and the weaving business went on uninterupted by the war.

Then it occurred to another man to use the cotton thread in place of linen for sewing, and he recommended it to the women of the town. It was so much smoother than the linen that the women liked it. The thread was sold in hanks and wound by the purchaser into little balls, but the merchant soon decided to wind the hank on a bobbin or spool for his customers as an added inducement to purchase it instead of the linen.

From this beginning the cotton thread trade has grown, and now silk and linen are used only for special work.—Philadelphia Record.

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Overheard in a Family. "Please shut that door." "You wait. I'll get even with you." "I never knew her to be on time." "You're the biggest fool I know!" "Mother, can't I have just a little more?" "Now, who's been at the sideboard?" "He'll catch his death of cold." "What makes daddy so late?" "How could you! My new tablecloth!" "I don't see anything the matter with her cooking." "Don't ever speak to me again!" "Mother!" Life.

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My Wife's Judgment

By DWIGHT NORWOOD

It is singular how persons will be misjudged. When I married Margaret the remark of a friend was repeated to me that much better judgment than I, and if we got on in the world it would be owing to this fact.

Now, while I love my wife dearly and appreciate her good qualities, I confess I don't like this decreeing of myself by comparison with her. I admit that she has on certain occasions advised me as to investments, and her judgment in the matter has turned out to be quite correct. But these persons who set such store by judgment seem to forget that there is such a thing as luck. When I proposed at one time to spend some money in advertising a scheme I had in view Margaret said to me, "You will not get a single reply," and it turned out that she was right. It was a piece of luck.

Then, too, when I proposed to go into business with a certain man she told me he would leave me in the lurch at the first opportunity. When I asked her on what she based her statement she said she didn't like the shape of his nose. The member was not shapely, I admit. It was altogether too small for his face, but I do protest against any woman condemning a man for such a reason. That the fellow relieved me of \$3,000 does not alter the argument in the least.

When I submitted this case to a woman friend of my wife she laughed and said, "That is reason enough for surprise at such nonsense she claimed that I had no business to ask my wife to give a reason for such an opinion. Margaret had such a run of luck in proving me wrong in certain instances that she came to believe she was very much my superior. True, she never said she was my superior and relied on me entirely for certain things about which she was very stupid. When I asked her one day, when my passbook was returned to me from the bank, balanced, to see if the balance in my checkbook agreed with the balance in the passbook, she replied that she didn't know how and couldn't learn. A nice person that to advise a man in business matters. But this is not the worst. On one occasion when I was decided to wind the hank on a bobbin or spool for his customers as an added inducement to purchase it instead of the linen.

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HEAVY ARTILLERY.

There's a Vast Difference Between a Howitzer and a Big Gun.

Not every civilian can tell offhand the difference between a gun and a howitzer. According to the Army and Navy Journal, the howitzer, in proportion to its weight, throws a shell very much heavier than that which a gun throws, but gives it much less muzzle velocity and has a correspondingly shorter range.

Take, for example, a modern gun that weighs forty tons, gives a muzzle velocity of 3,000 feet a second and has a range of anything up to fifteen miles. A howitzer of the same caliber would weigh only 6.3 tons and would give a muzzle velocity of only 1,100 feet a second.

The gun can be mounted only on board ship or in permanent fortifications, but the howitzer can be taken into the field. It has a special transporting wagon, from which it can be readily shifted to its firing carriage.

The foreign 6.3 inch howitzer is capable of being fired up to 65 degrees of elevation and at 43 degrees has a range of 10,900 yards, its maximum. The shell weighs 760 pounds and carries as a burster 114 pounds of high explosive. It is said that the shell contains no shrapnel, but that assertion is open to doubt.

IMPOSSIBLE PROBLEMS.

Squaring the Circle, Perpetual Motion and Defying Gravitation.

The circle has never been exactly squared. They have been trying during 6,000 years and have not yet found the length of the side of a square equal in area to any given circle. The reason of this is because the area of a circle has never been found, and this because the ratio of the diameter to the circumference is yet unknown.

The first eleven figures of the ratio, 3.1415926535, are a mere beginning. They have been computed out to 635 figures without the defunct coming to an end—that is, the figures representing the length of the circumference and of the diameter are known to be incommensurable, or impossible to express by two whole numbers.

The enormous labor of carrying out this dividing of 435 integers could have as well been saved, because the higher mathematics has proved that the ratio cannot be expressed in a finite number of terms. Hence the work of attempting to square the circle is wasted. Likewise the useless labors of perpetual motion seekers, searchers after the square root of one-half and overthrowers of the law of gravitation.—Edgar Lucien Larkin in New York American.

Dared Them to Shoot Him.

In 1894 Colonel Daniels of the Seventh Rhode Island became unpopular with some of his command, and a rumor spread that he would be shot at the next engagement. He heard of it. It was customary when guns had been loaded for some time to have them discharged into some convenient bank, and Colonel Daniels took advantage of this. Marching his regiment out with loaded rifles, he faced them toward a suitable elevation, and, taking position on the top of it and in front of them as at dress parade, he gave the commands "Ready," "Aim," "Fire!" and the pieces were discharged.

Needless to say, any man could have shot him with little danger of discovery, and, needless to say also, none of them did. There were no more threats of that kind in his regiment.—"Recollections of a Varied Career."

Travel in 1760.

In these days of rapid transit a paragraph from a Yorkshire paper of 1760 is interesting. It is an account of a London merchant's journey from London to Dublin and back. Leaving London on Monday evening, the traveler reached Liverpool on Wednesday morning in time to catch the packet for Dublin, which city he reached on Thursday. During that day he transacted his business in the capital and next morning sailed for Liverpool, arriving there on Saturday. Monday saw him back in London, and his journey was complete, having taken only eight days! "And," concludes the writer, "there is every reason to believe that it will be possible to beat even this performance in the near future."—London Opinion.

Applause in Ancient Rome.

The applauders in the theaters of ancient Rome were much more punctilious in the matter of applause than modern audiences are. When the Roman theatergoers were fairly well satisfied with a play they applauded by snapping with the thumb and middle finger. If they wanted the actors to understand that they were really satisfied with the performance they clapped loudly by beating the left fingers on the right hand. A more hearty token of approval was given by striking the flat palms of the hands against each other.