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“Our Puzzles Once More”

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2022

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We had scarcely glanced at this affair when we pronounced it an imposition, notwithstanding Mr. K's assertion to the contrary. In the first place, had it been "a genuine article," it would not have been written in as free and running a hand as it is—a hesitation would have been apparent about the characters. In the second place, there is no word in the English language which ends as Mr. K's word "Vsmukks" does—that is to say with double-duplicate letters. But the same method which serves us in the deciphering a true cypher, will enable us to demonstrate the falsity of any fictitious one. It may afford our friends some amusement to follow us in the process of a demonstration in the present case.

The reader will observe that we have italicized three words in the cypher, and upon these three depends all we have to say. We begin with "mw," a word of two letters. Now all English words of but two letters consist of a vowel and a consonant. Let us suppose the "m" to be the vowel "a," and let us prefix this to every consonant, and see how many words can thus be made. For example—ab, ac, ad, af, ag, &c—we find no English word until we come to "ah"—and all that can be made by placing "a" first, are "ah," "am," "an," "at," and "ay." Now, placing "e" first, let us prefix it to every consonant in the same way—then place all the other vowels first, respectively; then place all the consonants first, respectively, adding the vowels. Having gone through the alphabet thus, we readily discover every word in the language, of two letters. There, in fact, are but thirty—ah, am, an, at, ay, if, in, it, of, on, or, up, us, be, by, do, go, ha, he, ho, la, lo, ma, me, my, no, pa, so, to, and wo. Now "mw," in the puzzle, must represent one of these thirty words. The word "am" we may as well strike out, for if "mw" were "am," it would be preceded or immediately followed by the pronoun I—but there is no single letter near it.

We now refer to the word "mlw." If "mw" is "ah," then "mlw" must be some word formed by the insertion of a letter between a and h. By running down the alphabet we immediately see that "ash" is the only word which can be thus formed. We now proceed to "an." If "mw" is "an," then "mlw" must be some word formed by the insertion of a letter between a and n. Running down the alphabet as before, we find that no word can be so formed—we therefore strike out an from the list of twenty-nine; for mw cannot be an. Going through the whole in this way, we see that mw must be either

- ah, from which may be formed ash,
- at, from which may be formed aft, ait, ant, apt, & art,
- ay, " " " " any,
- af, " " " " aaf,
- oa, " " " " oaw,
- or, " " " " oar,
- by, " " " " bay, bey, boy, and buy,
- he, " " " " hee,
- my, " " " " may,
- to, " " " " tho', and two.

We have thus narrowed the question in regard to mw very much—from thirty to ten words; one of which it must be. At the same time it is equally certain that mlw must be one of the words in the second column. Now we refer to the third italicized word laam.

If mlw be ash, then laam will be a word of this form, s . . a, in which the dots represent two unknown letters of the same kind. If mlw be aft, then laam will be a word of this form, f . . a. If mlw be ait, then laam will be l . . a, &c. &c. Going through the whole second column thus we get this schedule.

s . . a	r . . a	o . . b
f . . a	a . . o	u . . b
l . . a	w . . o	o . . h
n . . a	a . . o	a . . m
p . . a	a . . b	h . . t
n . . a	e . . b	w . . t

That is to say, we prove that laam must be some word which can be formed by placing double letters where the dots are in some one of the words in the schedule. The slightest inspection will satisfy the reader that h . . t must be the one, if any; for here alone can the category be fulfilled. By inserting o o, we get the word hoot. Laam is then hoot or nothing. But the hypothesis of the word hoot is founded upon that of the word tho' in the second column of the first schedule; and tho' upon to, in the first column. We now arrive at a definite conclusion. Either Mr. Kulp's puzzle is not genuine, or we stand for to, mlw for tho', and laam for hoot. But it is evident that this latter cannot be—for in that case both w and a represent the letter o. What

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