The Observer.

MORO, OREGON :

FRIDAY........... MAY 22, 1908

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THE MYSTERY OF THOMAS MERITHEW.

[Original.]

In 18— Thomas Merithew, a wealthy gentleman of Buffalo, died. His life had been exemplary. He had expended large sums in charity and on his church. He had never been in business, nor had it been necessary for him to earn money, for he had inherited a fortune, which grew steadily while in his possession. Since he left no children, his wife inherited all his property. A few years after his death the wife died, and the estate passed into the possession of Merithew Ingersoll, his nephew.

During Thomas Merithew's life there were whisperings concerning him. It was said that he did not live happily with his wife and that he would frequently go away from her; that when he did so no one knew where he went; that at such times instead of being a model of probity he led a wild life. But there was a discrepancy in these reports, for if no one knew where he went how could it be known that he lived a wild life?

Ten years after his death his former friends and acquaintances were astonished to read in a newspaper that a young man living in New York city had put in a claim for the Merithew fortune. This person had been brought up under the name of Edward Coyle, but claimed the name of Edward Merithew, asserting that he was a legitimate son of Thomas Merithew, that his mother had been married to Merithew prior to the latter's marriage to his acknowledged wife and that as the sole surviving heir he was entitled to all of his father's property.

The case proved intensely interesting to both those who knew the Merithews and to the public generally. As soon as it was begun the rumors that had been circulated during Thomas Merithew's life took shape. Leonard Griffin, a Buffalonian, testified that he had had a speaking acquaintance with Merithew; that on one occasion while visiting New York he had met Merithew on Wall street, had bowed to him, and Merithew passed on without noticing him. Wondering if he could be mistaken in his man, he followed him and saw him go into an office. Merithew soon came out, and Griffin, going in, asked who the man was. He was told that he was William Coyle, ostensibly a bond broker, but really a speculative investor.

Another witness, Putnam Palmer, testified that in a restaurant in New York he had seen a man he supposed to be Merithew. Merithew was with a woman and a boy. Palmer looked at Merithew, who returned his gaze without recognition. Upon inquiry at the desk he was informed that the man often dined there with the woman and the boy, who were understood to be his wife and son.

Leonard Anderson testified that Merithew had told him that there was a man in New York who so closely resembled him that the two men were often mistaken for each other. Counsel for defendant before the trial came on had endeavored to find this double. He traced him up to a date not far from that of Merithew's death; then the double suddenly disappeared. He also searched for the wife and son, but could find no trace of them. The attorney made a strong point of the fact that they had made no claim to Merithew's fortune at the time of his decease.

Witnesses were produced who knew Thomas Coyle of New York, and they one and all testified that he was not a man of good character by any means. He was known to have been interested in the organization of spurious corporations, from which he invariably retired with the money of the credulous investors.

There would have been no case at all for the claimant had it not been for Thomas Merithew's frequent disappearances. Counsel for the defense made every effort to fix the place or places to which he went during one or more of his absences from home, but failed. The moment he left Buffalo he seemed to have passed out of existence. Ingersoll, the defendant, ransacked his aunt's letters, hunting for one from her husband written during one of these periods, but found none to prove that he was not in New York.

When the trial was concluded and the jury returned to the room to announce a verdict it was found that there was no agreement. Six jurors were for the plaintiff and six for the defendant. Of course there was a new trial. New evidence adduced at this trial was mention by Mrs. Thomas Merithew in a letter to her husband of a former marriage of her husband, but when Merithew had come to Buffalo many years before he gave out that he had married at nineteen and his wife had died. An acquaintance of Mrs. Coyle testified that she was not an educated woman and must have been a few years older than her husband. The claimant stated that she had died very soon after the death of Thomas Merithew.

The second trial resulted, like the first, without a verdict, though ten of the twelve jurymen were in favor of the plaintiff. After this second trial the plaintiff withdrew his claim. He afterward lived in comfort under the name of Coyle. It was supposed that the case had been settled out of court.

There are two theories held among those who followed the case with reference to the cause of this compromise. One is that Ingersoll was convinced that the claimant was the rightful heir, the other that he believed that he would eventually convince a jury that he was. On all points of the case the public are and have since been equally divided.

EMMALINE C. BURKE.

Sharps and Flats

[Copyright, 1907, by T. C. McClure.]

Sam Croy was the butt of Yorkville and had been since he was a stuttering boy of ten. Had there been a medical examination in his case it would have been discovered that there was nothing wrong about Sam except that his brain worked more slowly than the average.

There came a day when a man of sense sat down to talk to Sam Croy in a sensible manner, and he dug up a lot of sensible things from that slow brain and laid the foundation for an earthquake. He was a man named Boyden. He took Sam aside and talked to him for a long half day, and he discovered what others might have dug up years before. Sam could see through a hole in a grindstone if given a fair show and time enough.

Mr. Boyden didn't take Sam into his confidence until after several interviews had been held and until sure of his man. The town of Yorkville was in the dumps just then. Business was slow, real estate stagnant and little doing in any direction. One afternoon in front of the town hall and just after a joke had been played on the town fool Sam turned to a citizen and drawlingly inquired what he would take in spot cash for his house and lot. His inquiry was answered by a roar of laughter. Sam had been known to have as much as a whole dollar in his possession at once, but never more. The property referred to was valued at $3,000.

The owner finally replied that he would take two-thirds of that amount. Before he could laugh again he had $50 in his hand to bind the bargain, and next day the papers were made out and he was handed the balance of his money. That was the clown's thunderbolt. Of course he was questioned by a hundred different people. That he should have $2,000 in his possession was an amazing thing. It was so amazing that the local papers dwelt on it to the extent of half a column and a constable walked him to the town lockup on suspicion. He might have walked him into a cell if Sam hadn't paralyzed him by threatening a suit for false imprisonment and assuming a dignity no one had ever seen him carrying before. He would not tell where he got the money, and it was the general opinion that he had found a treasure somewhere.

In the course of a fortnight Sam bought three more houses and lots and a farm in the suburbs. Then he was fairly mobbed by inquirers, and the two constables in town went looking for clews. Both local papers had something to say—much to say. They had so much to say that scores of people went down and tore the abandoned sawmill to pieces in their hunt for treasure. They also searched through woods and fields and missed no stumps or hollow logs. The town fool went on whistling "Yankee Doodle" and buying all property offered him. The town had so long carried the idea that Sam Croy always told all he knew without any coaxing that it felt hurt to the quick by his reticence. Now and then "our reporter" had interviewed him to make a column of sarcasm. The sarcasm was now left out, and our reporter very solemnly inquired of his readers if they had a murderer among them.

If any one else than a town fool had started in to buy real estate there would have been a boom on in no time. There were plenty willing to sell because they could get their price and because in a way they felt that they were doing the buyer up. It was not until he had laid out $50,000 in silky greenbacks and announced that he had more left that one of "our reporters" got on to the snap. He wouldn't have hit it then but for a tin peddler that came along and gave things away. He called "our reporter" a dough head for not having seen through the scheme at the very start. He called the constables asses for thinking there was any crime connected with it. Under and around the town for a distance of ten miles square was an oil basin, from which millions of gallons would be pumped. The men who had bored for salt several years before must have discovered this, but waited until they could enlist capital. Capital had been raised and Sam Croy put forward as a dummy. He would make a million clean dollars out of it, and the men who had taken him for a fool would get left.

It was now as plain as day to the Bugle and the Clarion, and they did their best to make up for lost time. They devoted pages to the new oil field. They issued extras. They published Sam Croy's picture and a history of his life and spoke of him as Mr. Croy, the intelligent and farseeing citizen. They published pictures of drilling machines and derricks and spouting oil wells, and in two weeks they jumped the price of real estate 200 per cent. It wasn't a boom that set in. It was a mad scramble to buy at any price. People came from points a thousand miles away and left their good cash. There were leases and options and sales until the county clerk almost went crazy. This lasted six weeks. Then the bottom dropped out of things. No oil, no natural gas, no nothing except that Sam Croy had bought at the lowest notch and sold at the highest. He was the only one who had. How much he and the sharper divided or how they divided it will never be known. Mr. Croy has established a business in Yorkville. He has also got married. Further, he has money to lend on good security, and the other eminent citizens who meet him at the postoffice bow in the most cordial manner and say:

"Morning, judge. Fine day, isn't it?"

M. QUAD.

No Flattery.

"I'm not sure," said Miss Plaine, "that you're just the photographer I'm looking for. I've been told you do very handsome work and make very pretty pictures"—

"Yes," interrupted the photographer eagerly, "but I can give you an exact likeness if you wish."—Philadelphia Press.

Illuminated Version.

The king was in the counting house
Counting up his money (oblivious of the fact that mere material welfare will not save a nation),
The queen was in the kitchen
Eating bread and honey (evidently shirking her duty to the state, as no children are mentioned).
The maid was in the garden
Hanging out the clothes (she should pray to be delivered from love of luxury and ease),
When along came a blackbird
And pecked off her nose (clearly a nature fake of the same class as the wolf-caribou story).

TWO MINUTE SKETCHES

Alexander T. Stewart.

By ROBERTUS LOVE.

For forty years the merchant king.

A. T. STEWART was not a merchant prince. He was the merchant king. For forty years he reigned with undisputed title. He was the greatest and most famous merchant of his time in the entire world. He built up the first really great retail store and wholesale establishment in America. His retail house was the largest in the world at the time. His name was powerful abroad, and throughout the United States it was a household word, spoken with awe and wonder. Old men of today recall the name of A. T. Stewart as an inspiration to business ambition in their youth. Men in early middle life remember that the same name was more familiar to them than that of any other business man when they were small boys.

Mr. Stewart died thirty-one years ago, leaving no children. His widow died ten years later. The magnificent marble mansion in which he lived on Fifth avenue, New York, has been razed and replaced by a commercial structure. Eleven years ago his successors in the great store on Broadway assigned, and the Stewart store building is now a Wanamaker establishment. Even the body of Stewart was stolen from its vault in New York, and there is still a dispute as to whether it ever was recovered. The Stewart name and business and fortune all have disappeared, but his fame lives.

A. T. Stewart was a Scotch-Irishman, born in Ireland and educated at Dublin university. He was a classical scholar, devoted to books in his early life and with no idea of entering trade. When he came to America, at the age of twenty, in 1823, he became a teacher in New York. Two years later he returned to Ireland to claim a legacy of about $5,000, and upon the advice of a friend in New York he bought in Dublin a stock of laces and other goods, which he brought back to America with him. He opened a small shop, advertised his wares and sold the goods at an enormous profit. This success revolutionized Stewart. He devoted his life to trade.

At the outset Stewart made up his mind as to his course in business. He determined to be perfectly honest, never to misrepresent his goods, always to watch every nook and corner of his business and to add more customers by pleasing those he got. It was his boast in old age that in all his career he never permitted a willful misrepresentation to be made in his store.

"How do you suppose that vulgar millionaire's wife ever managed to get in the society of such exclusive women?"

"I believe she always loses at bridge."—Baltimore American.

Qualified Success.

"Was your show a failure?"

"Not entirely," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes. "The public didn't like it at all, but we are still managing to convince the public that it is all right."—Washington Star.

A Comprehensive Repentance.

I didn't mean to do it;
I surely meant it well,
Nor knew you wouldn't like it,
But how was I to tell?
I didn't need to do it,
But didn't know it then,
And now I know I did it
I'll never do so again.
—Harper's Weekly.

The Busy Professor.

"Have you had the grip yet, professor?"

The Professor—Really you must excuse me. I have been so busy I've had no time for anything.—New York Life.

The Poor, Silly Girl!

An heiress who lived in Dubuque
Was courted and won by a duque,
But the nobleman gay
Made her wealth fade away,
And she had to go out as a cuque.
—Denver News-Times.

Value Received.

The Cashier—If this gets out our depositors will be down on us in force tomorrow.

The President—Well, we'll give them a run for their money.—Puck.

The Farmer's Wife

Is very careful about her churn. She scalds it thoroughly after using, and gives it a sun bath to sweeten it. She knows that if her churn is sour it will taint the butter that is made in it. The stomach is a churn. In the stomach and digestive and nutritive tracts are performed processes which are almost exactly like the churning of butter. Is it not apparent then that if this stomach-churn is foul it makes foul all which is put into it?

The evil of a foul stomach is not alone the bad taste in the mouth and the foul breath caused by it, but the corruption of the pure current of blood and the dissemination of disease throughout the body. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery makes the sour and foul stomach sweet. It does for the stomach what the washing and sun bath do for the churn—absolutely removes every tainting or corrupting element. In this way it cures blotches, pimples, eruptions, scrofulous swellings, sores, or open eating ulcers and all humors or diseases arising from bad blood.

If you have bitter, nasty, foul taste in your mouth, coated tongue, foul breath, are weak and easily tired, feel depressed and despondent, have frequent headaches, dizzy attacks, gnawing or distress in stomach, constipated or irregular bowels, sour or bitter risings after eating and poor appetite, these symptoms, or any considerable number of them, indicate that you are suffering from biliousness, torpid or lazy liver with the usual accompanying indigestion, or dyspepsia and their attendant derangements.

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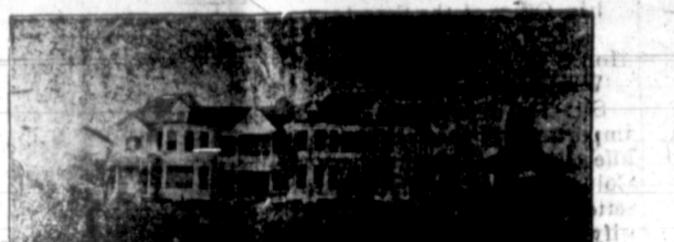

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