



"Enigmatical"

Alexander's Weekly Messenger

January 15, 1840

p. 2, col. 4

Weekly Messenger Images Courtesy

American Antiquarian Society

www.howtoreadpoe.com

original website materials

copyright © Jack DeLand 2024

Enigmatical.

Some weeks since, in an editorial article under this head, we mentioned that, with a proper method, it would be easy to decipher any piece of writing in which arbitrary signs were made use of in place of proper alphabetical characters—pledging ourselves, at the same time, to read any thing which should be sent to us thus written. In consequence, we have received the following letter:—

To the Editors of Alexander's Messenger.

DEAR SIR:—Having noticed in a late number of the Messenger, an article headed "Enigmatical and Conundrumical" in which there is a very curious riddle, unriddled by you, and in which you say that you pledge yourself to read any hieroglyphical writing, I have been induced to send you the following specimen of a puzzle, and beg you to give a translation in the Messenger.

Yours, very respectfully, H.

850; ? 9

O 9? 9 2ad; as 385 n8338d—?† sod—3
 —86a5: —8x8537
 95: 37od: o—h—8shn 3a sqd?8d—††—og37
 —8x8539 95:
 Sod—3 o—9 fo—1708xah— 950?9n †† 50537
 —8x8537 95:
 Sod—3 e 378 n9338d— 858†† †† 38537
 —8x8537 95: sod—3
 H!ads3—nos8 †† sahd37 sos37 —8x8537 95:
 —og37 o—9
 Sdho3 †† sahd37 95: 80; 737 o—9 ! a28dshn
 o?! n8?853
 †† 27an8 o5: otg38—9 2038? 95

Our correspondent will know by the date of his communication, that we could only have received it on the morning when we go to press (Tuesday)—consequently we must have read his puzzle *instantly*. We assure him that it gave us no trouble whatever. He will observe, however, that he has committed several errors in his alphabet. For example "implement" is divided into two words, and "wise" is written "wite"—nor has he made any punctuation. The difficulty of deciphering is, of course, increased. We not only translate his enigma, but give its solution. It is as follows:—

ENIGMA.

I am a word of ten letters. My first, second, seventh and third is useful to farmers; my sixth, seventh, and first is a mischievous animal; my ninth, seventh, and first is the latter's enemy; my tenth, seventh, and first supports life; my fourth, fifth, seventh and sixth is a fruit; my fourth, fifth and eighth is a powerful implement; my whole indicates a wise man.

The answer is "Temperance."