

BRITAIN'S SECRET SERVICE.

How it Compares With Foreign Institutions.

All the great nations require information about other countries which is not obtainable openly. For this reason the Intelligence Departments of the great military powers on the Continent are organized on a scale of cost and efficiency undreamed of in this constitutional country.

In Russia the secret police employ a considerable number of agents, both male and female, who are resident in England. Some of these paid agents, or spies, are people well known in society. Their duties vary from diplomatic work of the highest delicacy to the collection of newspaper cuttings.

One of the points attended to by the Russian Secret Service is the record of every English public man who speaks or writes about Russia. On one occasion the present writer had the opportunity of seeing the system followed by the Russian police. Every speech and every writing of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre—an innocent and not very formidable personage—with particulars of his birth, parentage, means, residence, habits, tastes and position were all entered up in a great portfolio.

Mr. Shaw-Lefevre was, I believe, at one time associated with the Friends of Russian Freedom, and is, therefore, like all the other members of that body, carefully watched by the agents of Russia.

Considerable sums are spent by Russia on secret service agents in Central Asia, Baluchistan, Persia and in India itself. The object of these agents is to belittle Great Britain and belaud Holy Russia. Constant diplomatic duels take place between British Consular agents and the avowed representatives of Russia. This subterranean war of secret agents is going on all over the world.

The German system of secret service is conducted on much more scientific lines. German knowledge of the United Kingdom is complete than that of most Englishmen. I was lately informed by a British diplomatist of the highest rank that the German general staff possesses a schedule of the contents of all the chief residences in the kingdom.

Every picture and work of art of any considerable value is known to the German general staff, while the study of British topography, the mastery of our ordnance maps, the knowledge of the fords, smithies, obstacles, population and high roads form the subject of examination from German officers who are told off to the duty of acquiring full knowledge of the counties of the United Kingdom.

The German agents in England, who are occupied in surveying our country with a view to contingencies, are generally to be found in couples in the guise of tourists. They know to a head how many horses the Irish farmers can supply within a given time. They have made a careful study of the idiosyncrasies of our leading men. Their tastes, habits, health, friends and means are carefully noted by the astute Teutons, who distil the honey of information from English fields for the German hive.

The principal feature in which German Secret Service differs from that of England is that the Germans co-ordinate the whole of their knowledge, and have it ready to hand in a concentrated form whenever it is required.

The English system is different. There is a Secret Service Fund controlled by the Foreign Office. So many Foreign Office agents are hostile to England, and are unpaid, that the Foreign Office service is often found to be useless for naval or military purposes.

During the last two years the admiralty has succeeded in wresting from the Foreign Office the control of the Secret Service, so far as it affects the navy. During the trouble with France over Fashoda agents of the admiralty were busily watching French opinion in the great centres. The English Military Intelligence Department is again a separate service.

What is required is to concentrate in one spot the whole of the knowledge obtainable. The Foreign Office should be the brain, the eyes and the antennae of the nation. The German and Russian Foreign Offices fulfil these functions. The British Foreign Office not only does not know what is going to happen; it does not want to know; while the Military and Foreign Office Intelligence Departments are separated administratively.

After the heavy experience of the Boer war it is inconceivable that the government will not take steps forthwith to reorganize the whole of our intelligence system—naval, military and diplomatic. Our ignorance of foreign countries contrasts unpleasantly with their knowledge about us.

France is rapidly becoming a peaceful power, and is losing that passion for military glory which has oppressed her for hundreds of years. Germany and Russia, however, require careful watching, and the pacific tendencies of the French Republic may be dissipated by the temptations of an alliance that Germany may yet have to offer.

What does the admiralty know about the German fleet? Very little. How many times has the naval attaché in Berlin visited Emden, or even Kiel? For what purpose are the miles of quays erected at Emden, a little

village with a tenth-rate museum in it? If the Boer war taught us anything it was to enforce the lesson that knowledge is power. There is nothing so conducive to peace as a full knowledge of the intentions and tendencies of other nations. An enormous outlay may be saved by the reorganization and establishment of an efficient and up to date system of secret service.

An Innocent Soul.

A Washington despatch referring to a thirty per cent. increase in the duties on all imports in Venezuela reveals an economic innocence that would scarcely be possible, we hope, anywhere but in Washington or The Hamilton Spectator Office. The despatch states that Venezuela as a war measure has suggested the duties to the amount stated, and then the government goes on to say that it is regarded in Washington as a keen stroke of political finesse, as it will practically place the indemnity which Venezuela has agreed to pay upon the shoulders of the foreign merchants who conduct all of Venezuela's imports.

The child-like confidence that pervades the despatch makes it clear that there are people who really believe in these manifest delusions. We are apt to think at times that no one able to read or think actually believes in them, that they are, indeed, merely promulgated and sustained by selfish interests. But this despatch, emanating from somebody able to read and write, clearly indicates that some simple soul—and he indicates that there are other simple souls with whom he has conversed who are in a similar state of mental twilight—implicitly believes that the merchants of Venezuela, by virtue of a tariff increase, will pay the foreign indemnity!

If so, they must either be surpassingly rich or they will come to smash. But they are probably in no danger. The moment the increased tariff goes into operation the merchant will calmly increase his prices to the amount of the duties, or perhaps a little more, to cover the interest and other charges on appreciated goods and the increased cost of living. The only way in which it can affect the merchant will be in the decreased volume of sales which increased prices will inevitably cause, but even against this obstacle the solvent merchant is amply able to guard himself.

The Washington gentleman may be assured that the plain, ordinary consumer of Venezuela will pay the foreign indemnity, even the wild Indian in the depths of the forests, with nothing but a wisp of cotton around his loins, will contribute his mite, although all unconscious that he is playing a part in a great international transaction. The only immediate effect on the foreign merchants will be that those who happen at the end of the blockade to have any stock of goods left will find it suddenly increased thirty per cent. in value.—Toronto Globe.

The Expedition Against Kano.

A British expeditionary force, consisting of rather over 1000 native African soldiers and some sixty-four British officers and civilians, recently started for Northern Nigeria, for the purpose of bringing to terms the Emir of Kano, one of the tributary sovereigns of the Sokoto Niger territories, which came under the direct control of the English government at the time of the Royal Niger Company. This great colonial possession, having its water front on the Gulf of Guinea and extending hundreds of miles northward to the Desert of Sahara, has been by degrees brought under the direct administration of the representatives of the English Colonial Office, but, in consequence of certain disagreements, growing, possibly, out of vigorous attempts to break up the slave trade, the Emir of Kano has bade the English defiance, and has collected about him a force of 10,000 men for the purpose of defending his city against the attack. As this resistance on the part of the Emir would be likely to cause other native potentates to assume an independent attitude face to face with the English, and as there are only 165 English officials in this dependency, which numbers many millions of natives, it was considered necessary to proceed forthwith in the work of establishing British supremacy in this Mahometan stronghold. Kano is one of the oldest commercial centres in the world. It was the centre of trade of northern and western Africa, the starting point of caravans across the Desert of Sahara fully 1500 years ago. The city is in the centre of an exceedingly fertile country, and stands itself surrounded by walls, built generations ago, which have a thickness of one hundred feet and a height of from forty to seventy feet. At this place have been collected the products of tropical Africa, such as gum arabic, feathers and ivory, while the cotton cloth manufactured at Kano was for a long time a luxury even in Europe. Relatively, the place has undergone a great decline in the last century or two, as other trade channels have taken the place of those which led across the desert. Whether with the small force at their command the English would succeed in overcoming the recalcitrant Emir was thought doubtful, but it speaks not a little of the confidence in themselves as English colonial administrators, that with such a small force they were willing to undertake what appeared to be a task attended with a great deal of risk.—Toronto World.

No Shopping in England.

The shopping woman, as she is known on this side of the Atlantic, is an unknown quantity in England, says an exchange. In that country it is not customary for any woman to go shopping—to visit the stores simply to inspect the goods exposed for sale. Those who enter the shops do so for the purpose of purchasing, and they are expected to leave an order or they will be in danger of having a cool reception the next time they 'go the rounds.' To examine a number of articles and not to buy some of them would be to impair the prospects of the saleswoman, the theory being that she must have offended the customer or have been otherwise remiss. The customer would hardly be able to leave the shop without an interview with the salesman. American women resent being asked why they are not suited and are consequently unpopular in Regent and Bond street shops.

According to a London paper, the American method requires a morning to buy a yard of chiffon. The customer, after leaving the baby in the store nursery, listens to a free concert for a few minutes, reads the latest magazines in the lounging room, consumes ice cream soda and a slice of watermelon, also free; looks at ostrich feathers, shirtwaists and mourning gowns, and as a last resort before luncheon time buys her chiffon. In England she would have been met at the door by a shopwalker, who wrests from her the object of her visit to the establishment, transfers her to a high chair before the chiffon counter and see that she buys. The plan is easier for the clerk, perhaps, but it deprives the shopper of much amusement. Besides, everyone knows that if one wanders around a shop long enough she is pretty certain to buy something she did not really come after. The shopkeepers benefit more by these accidental purchases than they lose by showing goods to shoppers who have no intention of buying.

Perishable Goods.

In a Vermont village there lives a young man who has reached the age of twenty-four with no apparent thought of taking to himself a wife, although all his companions have either "settled" or left the place. He is regarded by the entire community as a confirmed bachelor. His mother looks upon his state with a sadness which has afforded more or less amusement to her summer boarders.

"There's one of his last pictures," said the mother displaying a photograph on a small card. "It's a good likeness, ain't it? Getting kind of drawed round the mouth, same as his pa, he is. I said to him that I'd been wanting he should have a dozen taken, so I could give 'em round to his friends—young ladies—for sometimes a picture standing on a bureau, facing right to you every morning, will start a kind of affectionate feeling. I've been waiting in hopes he'd think of it himself, but when I saw that he was beginning to fade and show his age I took matters right into my own hands and marched him to the photographer quick as I could. I only hope some good may come of it."—Youth's Companion.

Three Signs.

When I was a young man, said an old timer, I was employed in an Ohio town of some 1,800 inhabitants. One day the town was billed from roof to foundation in flaming letters, "They're Coming!" One couldn't go amiss of the big letters. They followed him everywhere, and half the town would awaken in the middle of the night with those huge letters staring them in the face, while they wondered what it all meant.

A week or more passed, and one morning every one of those signs was covered with another equally flaming "They Have Come, at Town Hall Tonight!" And you may be sure the town turned out in force. There wasn't standing room, although a liberal admittance fee was charged. Inside a big curtain excluded the stage, and to this all eyes were turned as the appointed hour drew near. There was a little delay, and it was about half past 8 when the curtain slowly rose, disclosing to view another of the big lettered signs, only the wording was different this time.

The sign read "They Have Gone!" And you can bet your last dollar it wasn't long before the townspeople had gone. Some clever fellows had worked the game successfully and got away with a snug little sum, leaving only a couple of townspeople to pull up the curtain.

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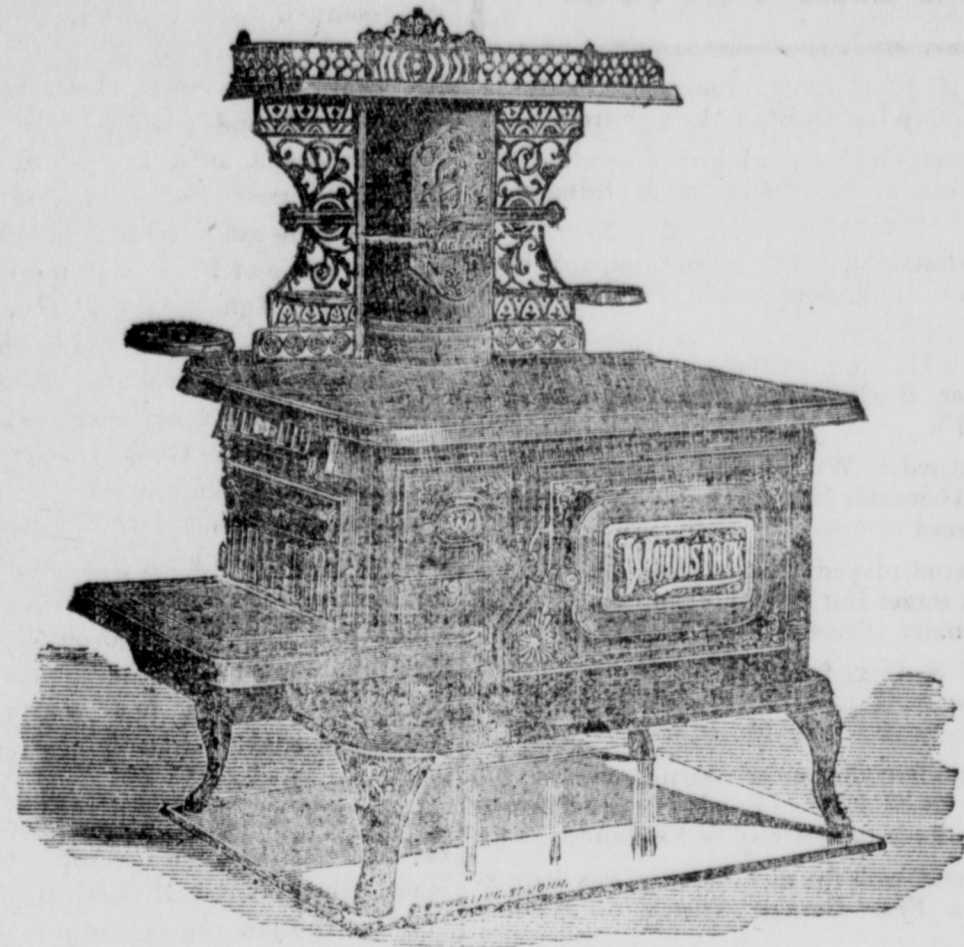
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