

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1901.

Spanish Mode of Getting Spies.

Two young lieutenants in the American navy who were in the Secret Service during the war with Spain, had told some interesting stories of the work assigned to them in the days of preparation before the actual outbreak of hostilities. Then the civilian in the group spoke up.

'I have no doubt,' he said, 'that our secret service in Spain, in fact, in all the Spanish countries, was very excellent, and that our men did some very brave things in the way of getting information that the government wanted; but in all that I have read I have never seen anything about the spy system that was established in this country by Spain at the time our men were working on the other side.'

'Don't believe there was any,' remarked another civilian, while the officers nodded wisely.

'Whether you believe it or not, it is a fact,' replied the civilian. 'I happen to know something about it myself. I have a story to tell of the Spanish spy system here during the war, and as there is a little romance mixed up with it it may interest you.'

'A friend of mine met around some years ago a young Spanish woman of great beauty. He is a New York boy and his introduction into the home of the young woman in Barcelona was all that convention demanded. He fell in love with her, but his stay in Spain was too short to allow of a properly conducted courtship. He didn't even get around to a declaration of love; but before he went away he knew he loved her and her eyes told him that she understood and that his case was not quite hopeless. He left his New York address with her and she promised that when she came to this country she would send her card to him and he might call.'

'That girl's face haunted that young man for two years. Her father was a merchant of great wealth and was also an official of the Spanish Government. The New Yorker's own modest position in the world deterred him from doing what he would have liked to do, sail for Spain and ask the girl to marry him. Two years after that meeting the young woman came to this country with a Spanish family. She was to return with the same people three months later. She apprised my friend of her arrival and the result was what you all suspect by this time. He married her. Nobody's consent was asked. They just went out and got married and a brief note to her friends and a long letter to her parents was all the notifying that she did.'

'In a small flat in Sixth avenue they started house-keeping and everything went along splendidly until relations began to be strained between this country and Spain. The young woman was loyal to her own country, but not a bit more so than her husband, was to his. Yet so great was the love he had for her that for a few days he sacrificed everything that he held dear, honor and country to her whims.'

'It came about like this: The war talk greatly excited his wife. She maintained that her country was being wronged in the papers here and day after day she made her husband write letters to the newspapers denying the truth of statements she saw in print. Of course, she could never get them published, and finally her husband refused to write them any more, maintaining that it was not a dignified thing for an American to do.'

'Gradually the young man noticed that his modest little home was becoming the headquarters for a number of swarthy men, who came in at all times of the day and night and held long conferences with his wife, to which he was not invited. He met these men under various names, and although he smoked and talked with them, they never admitted anything more than a purely social object in their presence.'

'But as the conferences became more frequent my friend noticed that his wife became more insistent in her efforts to make him see the Spanish side of the controversy. He had done some newspaper writing in his time and day and night he had to write articles that his wife suggested. These articles were taken by her and he never knew just what became of them, although he suspected that they were taken

by her Spanish friends and used as they thought best.

'It gradually dawned upon my friend that he was being used by men who were practically the enemies of his country, and he felt a deep humiliation; but already his home life was changing and in his great love for the woman he had married he was miserable over the thought that any defiance of her and her wishes at the time might bring to a sudden end the short period of happiness he had enjoyed with her.'

'It wasn't until the Spanish cruiser *Viscaya* came to this port, shortly after the destruction of the *Maine*, that direct overtures were made to my friend by his wife. She spoke to him at great length on the injustice that her country was suffering over the Cuban matter, and finally wound up by saying that her country was going to need friends in this country before long, and asking him if he would be one of them. It was as plain as day to the husband that his wife was the tool of the swarthy friends who came so often to see her, but she was a willing tool, for her love of her country was great, greater than her love for her husband, and the idea that that country was menaced by another country was agony to her.'

'This once quiet home became a rendezvous for all the secret agents of Spain in New York. Officers from the *Viscaya* attended conferences there and the plotting and scheming went on until one fine evening my friend, who had been drowning his sorrows in liquor, came home and ordered everyone of the visitors out.'

'There was quite a scene then. The wife protested and the visitors looked threatening, but out they all went just the same, and that was the beginning of the end. The next day my friend was filled with remorse over what he had done and his penitent attitude resulted in a renewal of consideration of him as a possible spy in the service of Spain against his own country.'

'Two days later he got a letter asking him to call at a certain office in a little street not far from Wall street ferry. The signature was a strange one, but it was evidently Spanish, and after thinking the matter over for a time he decided to go and see what the writer wanted. He found his man in a small office on the second floor of a tumble down building and introduced himself. There were a number of Spanish looking men around, but his interview with the man who was evidently the leader of the outfit was behind the closed door of a little room off the main office. The first question put to him was:

'You love your wife?'

'I do,' was the reply.

'Then listen to me attentively,' and the man proceeded to unfold his plans.

'Spain needed agents in this country. War would be declared very soon—it was declared the next day—and much must be done. Would he enter the Spanish secret service? The things he would be asked to do would not endanger his life or his good name. He was simply to engage on some newspaper as a reporter, and with this backing to seek certain facts that the Spanish were desirous of obtaining.'

All of this was put with exquisite tact, but when my friend indignantly spurned the offer a change came over the other.

'You do this thing or you lose your wife. This is no time for parley. Will you accept?'

There was a faint rustle behind my friend. Turning he saw his wife standing in the rear of the room. Her face was pale, but resolute. She stayed there just long enough to say: 'He has the right to say what he does,' and then left the place.

'I am ashamed to say that my friend after half an hour more with this smooth Spaniard became a spy against his own country in the service of Spain. There is no use going over the suffering that he endured and the agony that weakened his ordinarily strong nature and brought him to such a disgraceful employment. Suffice it to say that he became a spy, and that he was let into secrets that amazed him.'

'The amount of information that the boss Spaniard had in his possession amazed him. He had charts of the harbor

of New York, maps of the Sandy Hook fortifications and of the forts in the Narrows, and submarine maps, purporting to show the exact locality of all the mines that had ever been planted inside of the Horse Shoe. He had correspondence from Washington giving a tremendous amount of information as to the government's plans and the signature to these letters showed that men of every nationality were doing secret service work for Spain.

'Now, I don't pretend to say how accurate this information was, because of course, I do not know, but certainly a spy system had been organized here by Spain and the work was going on steadily. The agents were numbered in the hundreds and they were spread all over the country. There was at least one man in every navy yard in the United States, and the boss Spaniard told my friend that some of them were in the employ of the Government as mechanics. He didn't show anything to prove this, or you can take it or leave it as you please.'

'The disgraceful position in which he found himself so preyed on the mind of my friend that he rode up and down on an elevated train for nearly five hours after his interview with the Spaniards. The more he thought over the matter the more convinced he became that he could not do what he had promised to. It was a long struggle, but honor won out, and the next morning when he went down to the office of Spain's agents it was with virtuous indignation written all over his face.'

'In a few choice words he told the boss Spaniard what he thought of him and his gang, and before leaving he announced that he was going straight to the Federal building to leave information there with the United States marshal. He did so, but an hour later when six deputy marshals reached the place there was not a Spaniard in sight, and all of their effects had been removed. There is a piece of news that never leaked out, yet I know what I have stated to be an absolute fact.'

'Well, my friend didn't go home until very late that night. When he did go he took a Boston friend, who had just arrived here and was going to stay over night with him. They got home to find an empty flat. The wife had made good her threat. She had taken with her only what belonged to her, and she left no word behind. He has never seen or heard from her since, although indirectly he knows that at the present time she is with her people in Barcelona.'

'For months he was a broken man, but gradually he is beginning to realize that such a woman was not worth the life's happiness of a good man, and ultimately I think he will be a better man for the experience. In the meantime life comes hard to him, and I think he suffers a great deal.'

It wasn't until after the civilian had left the party and the naval men were laughing over the story that another man in the crowd who had puffed his cigar lazily all through the narrative and had made no comments at all, remarked:

'You fools, couldn't you see that that man was telling you the tragedy of his own life.'

Where He Was Weak.

Mr Jowders looked gloomily at the letter to which he had just painfully affixed his signature and then cast a dubious glance at his wife.

'Do you want to just run this over before I send it to son James?' he inquired; and when Mrs. Jowders shook her head, he hastily folded the sheet, which bore the marks of hours of toil, and thrust it into an envelope, which he sealed with trembling expedition and then leaned back in his chair with an air of relief.

'I was afraid you'd want to read it, and then most likely 'twould be all to do over again mother, like the last one,' he said. 'But I'm glad James wrote he didn't mind a word misspelled here an' there. There's some things I can do, but I never could seem to get a good purchase on the system of spelling some way.'

'As I view it,' continued Mr Jowders, 'there's some words you can spell by the looks, and some you can spell by the sound; them I can most gen'ly manage. But when you come to spelling by judgment and main strength my chances are about as slim as they make 'em.'

'How that woman glared at you?'

'Yes; I've either bowed to her when I don't know her; or else I know her and haven't bowed to her.'

Minister Wu Tells of China's Great Famine.

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'Yes, it is true, only too sadly true. I fear, that portions of my unhappy country are in the throes of a terrible famine,' said His Excellency, Mr. Wu Ting Fang, the Chinese minister at Washington.

He was seated in the handsome parlors of the Legation and made this reply to a representative of the Christian Herald, who had called upon him to inquire into the authenticity of an account of the famine of China, which had recently appeared in a New York paper. He read the clipping carefully, and added:

'I trust that this report is exaggerated. I sincerely hope that in some of its details at least, it is, but I received advices from the governor of Shensi yesterday which led me to fear that the conditions are appalling heartrending in the extreme.'

'What has caused the famine? Primarily, of course that which always causes famine in any part of the world—drought and consequent failure of crops. But there are other things in this case which have aggravated the trouble, and augmented the usual horrors of famine. I refer to the Boxer, uprising, and the state of affairs which has existed in certain provinces of the country since that occurred.'

'Will you please tell me, Your Excellency, in what provinces the famine is prevailing and how large a territory they cover?'

'The Provinces of Shensi and Shanai. They are in the northern part of the empire, and together occupy an area of more than 100,000 square miles. The population of Shensi is estimated at 10,000,000, and that of Shanai at 14,000,000. Shensi, which was, as you know, the ancient capital province of China for three or four thousand years, is where the Emperor, and the Empress Dowager, and the Court, fled when they left Peking, and are there still, pending the final action of the combined Powers.'

'That the famine condition of Shensi is aggravated by this fact cannot be doubted. At the least calculation, the Emperor's household and following must be five thousand persons, and while I have no way of knowing positively, yet I think it is a conservative estimate to place the number of soldiers who would be with them at twenty thousand. This makes twenty-five thousand more to feed daily than the usual residents of the province, and when you consider that for more than three years there has been a drought in that part of China, and that in consequence the crops have been completely cut off, you can understand in a measure what the famine must mean. And yet, unless you realize certain other things you will not be able to understand it fully.'

'First,' the minister continued, 'you must remember how inaccessible these provinces are. They are a thousand miles inland; there is practically no trade relations to speak of between them and the rest of the country or the outside world. The people are almost altogether farmers; they raise barely enough to supply their immediate wants year by year; but in time of famine this supply is cut off, and there is no way to supplement it. No railway communication; scarcely any steamboat traffic, even on the river courses and a coolie system that is utterly inadequate to meet the demands. When the crops fail, starvation always stares them in the face. Famine is not new in that part of China—unfortunately no; it is of frequent occurrence there though perhaps never as bad before as it is now. This comes from its isolated position, and from the ignorance of the people more than anything else. When the crops fail in the southern part of China, rice, the main article of food, can be shipped in and the deficiency supplied; but in the interior of northern China it is very different, and the suffering is almost beyond belief.'

'There is no reason for the famines which occur so frequently in this part of China—no reason which might not be prevented, and which, were it in this country, would be prevented. The great Hwang ho or 'Yellow River,' which flows between the two provinces, is a fabulously long river. I would not venture to tell you how long it is in all its course, lest you might think I was using my Oriental imagination. While,

with proper irrigation, it might make that territory through which it flows the garden spot of the world for productiveness, yet its mighty volume of water rushes down from the mountains of Siberia and almost every year causes desolating destruction to both life and property. So much is this true, that in the native tongue it is called 'The River of Sorrow.' Sometime, when my country has awakened to its own grand possibilities, this river will become one of the highways of commerce, but now it merely adds to her troubles.'

'In Shensi, the famine is fully as appalling as in Shensi, and yet, at but a little distance under the surface of the ground, there is as fine a mineral deposit as can be found in any country of the globe. When Baron von Richthofen made his examination of the minerals there, he gave it as his opinion that there was a deposit of coal beneath the surface sufficient to supply the markets of the world for a thousand years. It is one of the dogmas of the religion of China that it brings evil to any person who tunnels into the earth, and on account of that superstition this supply of coal, even at this time, is practically untouched. Doubtless, this seems absurd to you; but so deep seated is this belief, that while for hundreds of years it has been known that the coal was there, it has never been mined.'

'It is this same ignorance which has caused the feeling against foreigners. You can form but little conception of the conservatism of my people. For ages—long, long before this republic was dreamed of—my people, in the ancient empire of China, were living along the same life of action which governs them today. The son was taught to reverence his father during his life-time and to continue his occupation after his death. He brought his wife home to his father's home, generation after generation; there he lived, there he died; his highest ambition was that he might be buried in the tomb of his ancestors. That is as true now as it was a thousand years ago, and one thing that my countrymen have never been able to understand is why any man should care to leave his native place, much more his country, unless some imperative want makes it necessary.'

'I think that you can see how this state of affairs has wrought to bring about the trouble which has overtaken China in recent years. Oh! if we could but become modernized! If our rulers would but open our doors to progress! We have resources that would soon make famine and want a thing of the past, and our commerce would govern all Eastern markets.'

'And yet think of it,' added Minister Wu, with a gesture of pain, 'they are dying by hundreds this very morning for want of the barest necessities of life. I had a communication yesterday from the Governor of Shensi, telling me that the horrors of the famine could scarcely be overestimated, and begging me to appeal to the Chinese in America to send them help. The famine is in the northern provinces, and the winter is on, and to the pangs of hunger are now added the sufferings of cold. Upon the poor natives of Shensi, the army of soldiers, the Court, and its attendants are quartered for an indefinite time.'

'As things are now, the court cannot return to Peking, and it must remain at the old capital. There is no food in the country around there, the long failure of the crops has swept it clean and dry of all products. Everything must be brought in on mule and coolie-back, and thousands must starve—even were the government in a condition to give public help—before supplies can reach them.'

'I have read of the wonderful generosity of the Christian Herald to India during the famine in that country, and while I sincerely trust that the one in China may never be so great as that one, yet I feel very sure that should its kind patrons care to do a little for those who are now suffering so terribly in the Middle Kingdom, it would be appreciated far more than I can express. There is a sad misunderstanding amongst my countrymen at this time toward all foreigners, but they are seeing that the Americans intend to be fair and honorable. This was evidenced when General Chaffee was presented with a memorial the other day by certain Chinese officials. And were the people of the United States to send a gift, even a slight one, to the famine-stricken provinces, it would surely go a long way toward helping the Chinese to realize that the foreigners are not their enemies. I should be more than happy to transmit to the governor of Shensi any communication, or send any assistance that might be raised for the famine sufferers.'

ABBY G. FAKER.
Washington, D. C.