

he could fully recover from his effort and regain his breath. A tall, lean man, whose color emblems showed him to be from Missouri, stood above him, while farther back and at a higher point the buzzing of the calciums and the long restless ray of light showed the location of this searcher of the night. Beneath it he could dimly discern the tower like structure on which it was mounted.

"You'd better get your clothes on," suggested the sentry; "or, if you want to, I'll call one of the other boys and get him to lend you a few dry duds. Sorry we couldn't have used the lights a little sooner and saved you the trouble of swimming up this far and gettin' all wet; but the boss is a little shy on carbons now, so he thought he'd make the moon work for an hour or two this evening."

Hillier, discomfited, started to don his wet clothing; but the guard insisted in homely phrase that he'd be a heap sight better off and run no risk of catching his death of cold if he would just let one of the boys loan him some clothes for a little while, and to this he finally assented. This infinite politeness and good humor, coating inflexibility, was a little trying.

"You seem to keep a pretty good watch along this border," he growled.

"Yes, fair to middlin'," the sentry said, with a chuckle. "We've been expecting you all day long. In fact, I suppose you're being expected from here clear through to Vancouver. You're the Englishman that's hankering to go to Washington."

Hillier turned toward him in amazement. What perfection of espionage was this? "For Heaven's sake, man!" he asked his captor in surprise, "how do you do it?"

"Watch that streak of light for a minute," the sentry answered, and as it leveled its ray along the line he saw here and there field booths with double lines of wire entering and emerging from them. "One's telegraph and telephone, and the other's this freak thing that shows men's photographs. Yes," he concluded, "your picture taken in five different positions has been in there since you first tried to cross the line to-day, and anyway if you'd got past us fellows, you'd have been picked up before you got very far into the interior."

Hillier sat stupefied. "Has anybody ever really got across this line?"

"Yes, three or four of them, here and there, mostly out West where the hills is rougher; but they all got gathered in sooner or later. One of 'em who tried it was a Jap, and the boys accidentally shot him. Another fellow was an Englishman, who made it over from Canada into Detroit, so I've heard."

"What happened to him?" Hillier asked, suspecting that this was the first bearer of the message who had preceded him.

"They didn't want to turn him loose, because he knew too much; so they decided he was a vag, and run him in till the war is over."

Hillier knew now what had been his predecessor's fate, but made no reply.

His informant after a pause continued, "There's been only one accident besides that which happened to the Jap, and that was a poor devil that undertook to go over in one of these newfangled airships. He certainly got his tire punctured all right, and came down mighty sudden." The soldier stopped for a moment and heaved a long sigh, and then concluded in a softer voice, "I was awfully sorry for that fellow. He wa'n't no spy nor nothing like that, but just a young newspaper chap doing the best he knew how to get the goods. He was done for when the boys picked him up. The Colonel felt about as sorry as anybody else, and got special permission from the Canadian Government to send a squad back with him as a guard of honor."

By this time Hillier had donned the dry garments that had been provided, and stood awaiting the further instructions of his captor. "Well, what am I to do?" he inquired, seeing that the man stood motionless.

"Oh, you can go back across the line, or if you want to one of the boys will find a place for you to bunk till morning. You see, you're kind of a distinguished guest. We all had orders to treat you nicely, and the Colonel will have a machine here to

take you back wherever you want to go to-morrow."

Baffled by vigilance and overcome by courtesy, the secretary, after bidding his captor good by, retired for the night to a camp cot in the quarters of a Lieutenant of infantry. It was long before he succumbed to a sleep of utter exhaustion. He was awakened by a bugle call in the morning, and found his host shaving himself before a small mirror suspended from the tent pole.

"Good morning, Mr. Hillier," the officer said. "Not quite as pleasant quarters as the secretary of the British Embassy is entitled to, and not many conveniences; but you're welcome to my razor if you'll wait a minute."

Hillier sat up, rubbing his eyes. Neatly stretched out on a camp stool before him were his shabby clothes, improved by washing, not only dry but pressed. He stared at them in surprise, while the officer laughingly continued:

"Yes, we did the best we could for them; but I don't think you made a friend of my orderly, as he swears he has worked on them all night long, and had requested a day's leave on the strength of it."

Thanking the officer for his hospitality, Hillier slowly garbed himself and stepped through the tent fly. Below him and stretching away as far as the eye could discern were gray brown embankments, one line within the other, and excavated with military precision.

"Intrenchments," came a voice behind him, observing his curious inspection. "We have to keep the boys busy, and besides the Government didn't want to take any chances. Those pits stretch across this continent now, and there won't be any trouble for a good many years to come for people to tell just where the border line is located. Like 'em?" he concluded whimsically.

"No, I can't say that I do," Hillier responded with equal good nature; "but they look business like."

"Oh, they're the goods sure enough," his informant continued; "but that isn't all. See that little mound over there?" and he pointed a bare brown arm over his guest's shoulder. Hillier nodded assent and looked inquiringly at his companion. "Behind that there's a brace of Gatling guns. Got them too every little ways. Never had to fire 'em yet, and hope we never will. But you never can tell. Same work's been done along the Mexican border line; but it's easier to guard. This war certainly has educated a lot of fellows; so that when it's over there'll be plenty of men can show callouses that were never decorated with 'em before. This country's bottled up now as tight as if the Lord Almighty had set a can over it," and he laughed at his own joke.

The motor car was placed at Hillier's disposal as promised, and before night fell he found himself back in his room at the hotel, no worse and no better for his experience. For ten days thereafter he made useless attempts to forward his message by every means that his ingenuity could suggest. Once he allowed it out of his hands, intrusting it through extremity to the care of a fisherman, and on the following day, with seals unbroken, it was returned to him by a polite officer of the United States army in civilian dress. Were it not for the gravity of his task, he would have come to regard it as a joke, a boy's game of prisoner's base or tag, in which he was always "it."

And then, as if to reproach him for his failure, there came from the clearness of the sky a swift and terrible thunderbolt. It was a message from England reporting the disappearance of that immense fleet which was to follow on his heels, and depended upon the delivery of his message for its immunity from attack. He had taken too long!

Stunned by this overwhelming disaster, shuddering in each nerve, and with every fiber of his body quivering, he sought the seclusion of his room, threw himself upon his bed, and buried his face in the pillows. Repeatedly there ran through his mind the self reproach that had it not been for his failure this shocking toll of war might never have been collected. An armada of greater strength than that which had fought off Cape Trafalgar had sailed gallantly out to its doom, trusting to him to avert disaster, and he in this hour of stress, when the fate of nations hinged upon his resource, had proved

inefficient! Over and over he reviewed the struggle he had made to accomplish his mission, but found even in this stern self criticism no flaw of endeavor. But in his hour of bitterness he thought that God might have been more kind.

CHAPTER X.

SUCH was the effect of the strange happenings of May and June that the poise of all Europe seemed trembling and unstable. Men who in all their lives had respected law and society began to question the value of communal authority, when even the most carefully reared power proved unable to protect itself against what appeared to be only one invention. Taxation had created government, which in turn had devised armies and navies and expended more and more money in their equipment. It had now been demonstrated that the discovery of some one new force, some one engine of destruction more powerful than any other known, could destroy the values of navies and armies in a day. And yet in this frame of mind, where anarchy seemed less terrible and Governments at best but weak organizations, the greed for aggrandizement and conquest reasserted itself.

In Russia the revolutionists took heart, and hoped to possess the land. In the Balkans, reeking with the blood of past strife, new forces were forming for independence. Rulers of neighboring Powers studied the map of Turkey, dreaming of what portion might be seized. China, rehabilitated for aggression by Japan herself, regretted a compact with the smaller country which prevented its seizure, now that it was so terribly weakened.

But the most threatening attitude of all was that of Germany toward Great Britain. The Hohenzollerns, a line of warriors, still held the ancient throne, and the Kaiser was ambitious for his country's advancement. An astute ruler of exceptional capacity, he already had advanced Germany's flag of trade beyond all seas, and by this means alone practically dominated all of South America. In all earlier days of this trade conquest the United States had been busied in her home enterprises, saying to herself that when she chose she could find a way to take the traffic of the southern continent with ease. With her eyes swaddled in silly egotism, she had waited till too late, and then, when her bandages were removed, suddenly learned that commercial brains were not confined to America alone. The sleeping giant had lost commercial supremacy in a continent which was hers by right of location and needs, to a race of industrious workers across the sea.

Nor had Germany neglected her fight for trade at home. There too she found egotists, so swollen with self sufficiency that by disastrous tariff methods they had been bested. England, failing to protect its producers, had driven her own farmers and carriers from the field, until, as one disgruntled farmer said, "You can't pick up a cabbage in a stall which don't bear the words 'made in Germany'"; and if a new crown was needed for the King, Germany would have stood a fair chance of booking the order. In a natural revulsion which had reached fever heat before the Japanese American war broke out, England was trying to obstruct this encroachment. The feeling thus engendered between the two nations culminated in one of envy on the part of Great Britain and one of hatred on the part of Germany. The Kaiser, calmly reviewing times and conditions, decided that the time had come to strike.

England, with power sadly diminished through the loss of her great fleet, and at the mercy of the United States in her richest colony, stood open to attack. While she was still mourning defeat, Germany took exception to the tariff laws in a very carefully worded message. It was one that under normal circumstances would have provoked demands for apologies, or, in a refusal of such, almost instant war. But now the lion was driven to temporize. That the Kaiser hoped for an open rupture and intended to leave no stone unturned for such an outcome, was demonstrated by his sending more curtly worded notes.

The English press retailed these to the public,

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THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH—By Ernest McGaffey



The dead leaf's whorl will hold a tang of thyme
In dim autumnal gardens, lone and gray;
The deep wood echoes to the water's rhyme,
Though spring has fled and summer passed away.
The drifts of winter, or the bloom of May,
What matters, if the spirit shall control?—
Not to grow old, but ever youthful stay,
Since Youth abides immortal in the soul.

The dial's tracing and the clock's dull chime
Will tell the tale of changing night and day;
The seasons wax and wither to their prime;
The sly months follow, flatter, and betray.
Let not life's fire burn feebly in your clay
While bugles summon, or the doom bells toll:
Not to grow old, nor let your strength decay,
Since Youth abides immortal in the soul.

The fateful edicts of the tyrant Time
How many mortals hasten to obey!
Yet there are those with courage all sublime
Who spurn his menace and dispute his sway,—
A time for laughter and a time for play,
However near or distant be the goal:
Not to grow old, and be the slow year's prey,
Since Youth abides immortal in the soul.



ENVOY

Prince, keep you young, how'er the wise men say;
Write this as precept on your secret scroll:
Not to grow old, the flower of youth to slay,
Since Youth abides immortal in the soul.

