An Intercepted Message

A Story of the New Telegraphy.

By Catherine Adams.

"WE MUST intercept that message," said Schmidt.

I could only look my unutterable astonishment. Schmidt was the senior partner in the firm of Schmidt, Rosenberg & Carey. I was Carey, the junior. Rosenberg we seldom saw, and it was just as well; he had no brains, but his money had been very useful when the firm was first launched, and, as he never interfered with the management, we were glad to continue as we had begun.

For the rest, "Schmidt, Rosenberg & Carey" is a firm of stock brokers well known on the stock exchange, where its operations are followed with keen interest.

"Well?" said Schmidt, seeing that I was all at sea; "you scarcely follow me?"

"I don't!" I declared, emphatically.

"That is because you have no imagination. A better financier I never knew, but you lack imagination. Now, I—" He paused.

"Have too much. You could well spare me some. But what is this move?"

"A crisis is imminent. There was another meeting at the foreign office this afternoon."

"Stale news!" I gibed. "Are not all the papers full of it?"

Schmidt went on as if I had not spoken. "Within the next 24 hours a message will be sent to Berlin. It will be the message—the all-important one that will materially affect the money market for some time."

"How do you know of this?"

"From the usual source, our private intelligence department — Bracebridge."

"It all sounds very pretty. I can quite understand how a premature knowledge of that message may affect our fortunes appreciably, but I fail to see how such a happy consummation is coming to pass."

"Really," said Schmidt, "I thought you had more sense! We shall intercept that message. I have arranged with a very clever electrician, who has Marconi's latest improvements at his finger's ends, to accompany you and myself on a little pleasure trip in the channel for a few hours. In such glorious weather what could be more pleasant than a jaunt on that charming little steam yacht, the Gladiola?"

"You have rechristened your craft?"

"No. For obvious reasons it will not do to use my own boat. So Messrs. Blick and Sampson, two American gentlemen, will embark on the Gladiola, which will be awaiting them in Dover harbor. When in midchannel, what more natural than our electrical friend's desire to experiment with his apparatus? Singular, too, that we shall take such a course as to be in the direct line of communication between the terminals at Dover and Antwerp."

"Antwerp! Then the message does not go direct to Berlin?"

"Impossible! It is wonderful to think that it can go to Antwerp without a break, and thence, with only one other stoppage, at Brunswick, right on to Berlin."

"But how shall we hit on the locality? That will require some fixing up."

"Leave that to me, dear boy! I have calculated it all to a nicety. I shall ever be thankful that my father persuaded me to serve in the navy rather than in the army for my term of conscription."

"You are a many-sided man," I said, admiringly; "but have you told the electrician?"

"The message is in cipher. Bracebridge will bring me the key this evening, when he will also bring the latest intelligence and the time of sending the message. . . . Besides, the operator is an impecunious man, and I shall know how to keep him from asking unnecessary questions."

"It is tremendously risky!" I said.

"Not at all! The only thing is to keep mum, and don't tell your wife!"

"Mrs. Schmidt is discreet," said the husband of that unique lady; "but Mrs. Carey—well," he added, diplomatically, "well, Mrs. Carey is too charming to be able to keep a secret."

Late in the evening of the same day I went to Schmidt's house in Charlton place. Bracebridge had already been and presented the latest intelligence—to-wit, that the operator at the government's wireless telegraphy office at Dover had been advised to be in readiness to receive a messenger from the foreign office about noon on the morrow. Schmidt had wired to the captain of the Gladiola to have steam up ready for us next morning. The telegraph operator had also been communicated with. My chief then proceeded to give me a few instructions regarding our adventure.

"We shall make a splendid coup!" he said. "Whichever way the message runs, its early knowledge ought to make our fortunes. I have telephoned our agent in Paris to be on the qui vive, and have wired to our man in Berlin. Mr. Whistler is prepared to work the oracle this side, and, by Jove! if we get the message, the thing is a dead certainty."

When, next morning, I met my chief at the railway station, I scarcely knew him. His blue-black beard and hair had become snow white. My clean shaven face was now adorned by a mustache and imperial.

The captain of the yacht and the telegraph operator met us at the Dover pierhead, and we were soon in the yacht's boat on our way to the vessel.

"Set her engines going at once, Steevens," said Schmidt, as we boarded the yacht. "We have none too much time. There is your course," and he handed the captain a chart.

The captain looked surprised.

"We are wishing to enable my friend here to try a little experiment on his own account," explained Schmidt. "He has a telegraph apparatus here, and a friend on shore will try to send him a message. They have agreed upon the route, and we shall intercept that message nicely if you follow the course I have marked and bring us to anchor there," and he pointed to the place marked on the chart.

Within two hours from the time we left the pier the Gladiola came to anchor at the spot marked on Schmidt's chart.

It was a damp, misty sort of morning; not at all like the glorious weather predicted by Schmidt. I shivered in my light summer clothing, and inwardly anathematized the whole concern.

The captain brought me a rug and some hollands. Gradually my frame of mind grew more sociable and benignant. I turned to the electrician, who stood near me.

"This is all very wonderful," said I, apropos of the new telegraphy.

"The wonder is that it was not discovered ages ago," he replied. "Think of the marvels of science that have yet to be grasped! Their name is legion."

The man was an enthusiast and began to talk of his ideas.

"Is that all your apparatus?" I asked, pointing to the indicator.

"O, no," the operator said, pointing to the top of the mainmast. "There is a temporary terminal fixed up yonder."

"Umph!" said Schmidt; "this is getting a bit too high-falutin' for me. How goes the time, Carey?"

"Ten minutes to 12," I said, remembering, with a start, what mission we were bound on.

"Everything is quite ready, Mr. Barr?"

"Perfectly in order," replied the operator.

"The time is pretty near now, so keep a sharp look-out."

We stood a little apart, watching him anxiously. A little curious as to the matter in hand, some of the crew looked on from a distance.

It wanted one minute to the time!

"Hist!" said the operator, warningly, as Schmidt turned to speak to him. There was a faint, rippling sound, just distinguishable from the apparatus, then the indicator began to work.

We scarcely dared to breathe as the operator took down the message anxiously and carefully. Schmidt could not restrain his excitement.

"Got it, Barr; got it?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said the operator. "Wait a minute."

"Where is the key to the cipher? I gave it to you, Carey," said Schmidt, in a tense whisper.

I fumbled nervously in my breast pocket. If I had lost it! But no! I held it up triumphantly.

Barr came away from his apparatus.

"Here it is; but it is not in cypher after all. It is very plain English."

"What?" from Schmidt.

The operator read from the slip of paper in his hands: "To Mrs. Dunlop, Hotel Marie, Ostend—Return at once. Bobbie very ill with measles."

I looked at Schmidt. Schmidt looked at me. He recovered the power of speech first, and I shall never forget the ebullition that followed. Sailors are supposed to be pretty well seasoned that way; but even the captain looked aghast.

In the middle of his roaring and rioting, the operator put up his hand warningly.

"Hark! What is that?"

Schmidt subsided a little.

"There goes another!" exclaimed Barr. "The coherer sympathized again."

"Catch it! catch it!" cried Schmidt, frantically waving his arms melodramatically in the air as if he would "hold up" all the sensitive particles of ether and restrain them from passing on the message.

"Too late, sir! What a pity you did not tell me to be on the lookout for two messages!"

"Pity!" roared Schmidt, stamping on the deck in an impotent fury. "How should I know that that donkey of an operator at Dover had a child down with measles? How should I know that he would send a message to his wife at Ostend just at the time he ought to be beeping the coast clear for the foreign office? By George! what business had he to be tampering with the government wires?"

But it is best to draw a veil over the proceedings of the next few hours. With regard to myself the whole business had turned out so quaintly that I was chuckling inwardly. I will not say that I was not chagrined at the result of our enterprise, but as I had not been so sanguine as Schmidt my disappointment was proportionately smaller. Besides, he had been so beautifully sold.

It was a mean advantage, perhaps, but I could not resist chaffing him as to the accuracy of his chart.

"You said we were placed exactly in a position to intercept a message between Dover and Antwerp. How could one to Ostend reach us?"

"Don't you know geography?" he growled. "Look on your map, and you will see that Ostend and Bruges too are in the line of communication with Berlin. That is why they are obliged to change the cipher so often."

"All right!" I said, severely; "you need not lose your temper again. If you had put more restraint on yourself at the time we should have caught the second message, too. It was simply lost in an exhibition of vocal fireworks."

"And it might have made our fortunes!" he said, sadly.

This is how it happened that our forewarned agents in Paris and Berlin did not get their expected instructions that day, neither did a certain pair of astute financiers become millionaires at that particular juncture of their careers.—Sketch.

KINGS AND THEIR MONEY.

Many Royal Persons Have Made Investments in American Securities.

Emperor William owned at one time $7,000,000 of American securities. About two years ago his holdings were transferred to the name of the Berlin banker, so it is impossible to tell accurately the amount of his holdings at the present moment. It is estimated, however, that they aggregate $3,000,000 and his yearly income from them is $150,000. So far as the records here show, the emperor never speculated in Americans nor invested in industrial securities. His holdings have always been railway bonds or stocks and his favorite issues are Louisville & Nashville, Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Missouri Pacific and Illinois Central. The empress of Germany is the individual owner of about $500,000 of American securities. These are in her own name, but the dividend payments are, by her order, made to a firm of Berlin bankers.

Other members of the German royal household, says the Minneapolis Journal, are owners of American securities, but the certificates are mostly in the names of their individual bankers. The securities so held amount to about $4,000,000. The czar of Russia holds $6,000,000 in American bonds and stocks, principally the former. These include issues of the Pennsylvania railroad, New York Central railroad, Northern Pacific, Canadian Pacific, Southern Pacific, New York, New Haven & Hartford and New Jersey Central. His holdings are registered in the name of a St. Petersburg firm, to whom all communications regarding them are sent.

Why He Doesn't Get Weary.

The wonderful physical endurance of Gen. Fukushima, who is in command of the Japanese troops in China, was thus explained to Frederick Palmer the other day by an officer who is over six feet tall and rather thin: "No wonder Fukushima does not get tired; his heart has to pump blood only about half as far as mine. It is the difference between supplying water to a two and a four story building."

Indians Make Toys.

On one of the Indian reservations in New York state is a toy factory which employs several hundred Indians all the year around. The toys manufactured here are shipped all over the world.

WILL LAST TWENTY YEARS.

New Kind of Fabric to be Manufactured by the Mills in England.

If the plans of certain English capitalists do not miscarry it will be possible ere long for the economical parent to purchase a suit of clothes which may be passed along among his sons for a fifth of a century, says the Chicago Chronicle. Mills are now being built in England for the manufacture of this kind of long-wearing material, which can be turned out in almost any color wanted. Think of getting a suit of clothes that will last for 20 years; that will cost only a third more than a suit costs now, and that will be absolutely waterproof without appearing to be so. Revolutionize is rather an overworked word, but it fits this case exactly. Instead of singing "Papa's Pants Will Soon Fit Johnnie," the refrain will run "Johnnie Soon Will Wear Pa's Pants," for when pa once begins to wear these extremely useful articles before Johnnie has got out of dresses he may continue to wear them for the next 20 years and by that time Johnnie will have grown up to them. The same with little Mary and her mother's skirts. Instead of cutting down the garments for the girl the mother will wear them for a generation or so and then turn them over to her daughter.

The Papal Income.

A recent letter from Rome in the Philadelphia Ledger states that the pope's income for 1900 amounted to $4,375,000, nearly two-thirds of which was income for securities and Peter's pence. The expense account of the holy father for the same year is figured at $1,099,000, of which $485,000 represents salaries. The remainder of the account includes the expense of keeping up the vatican, the repairs at St. Peter's, charities, and contingent expenditures and losses. The most notable item in this account is the personal expense of the pope himself, which amounts to $2,500, showing that he lives a simple life. There will be a balance of over $3,000,000 to be added to the contingent fund which now amounts to over $30,000,000, a large part of which is in American securities. The satisfactory condition of the papal income shows that Leo XIII. is a more thrifty man and a better financier than his predecessor.

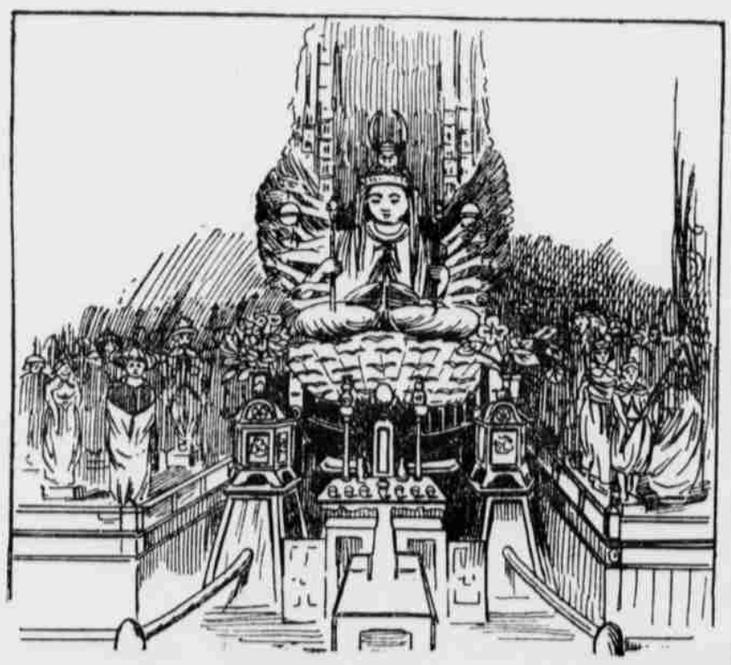
China's Silk Crop.

The ordinary annual crop of silk in China is estimated at about 21,000,000 pounds, of which over 60 per cent. is consumed in the country where it is produced.

MOSES E. CLAPP, MINNESOTA'S NEW SENATOR.

Mr. Clapp, who was chosen by the legislature to fill the senatorial seat left vacant by the death of Cushman K. Davis, is 49 years of age. He was born in Delphi, Ind. When he was seven years of age his parents moved to Wisconsin. He graduated from the Wisconsin law school in 1873. Seven years later he moved to Fergus Falls, Minn., where he took up the practice of law. In 1891 he located permanently at St. Paul. He was elected attorney general of the state in 1886, 1888 and 1890, and has always been prominent in politics. He was a candidate for the republican nomination for governor in 1896, but was defeated by Gov. Clough.

IMAGE WITH A THOUSAND HANDS.



The wonderful Japanese image here illustrated is supposed to be a representation of the god Kwannon. The central figure of the group shows one of the thousand-handed gods—there are a thousand others very much like him in the same temple—seated in a full-blown lotus, the sacred flower of Buddhism. The image and its magnificent pedestal are made entirely of beaten brass or bell metal. When a worshiper makes an offering he strikes a bell in front of the statue to direct attention to his accompanying prayer. It is believed by the faithful that the original statue was set up in the middle of the twelfth century.

Progress in Medicine.

Medical science grows apace with civilization and among the leading remedies, one that combines all the results of scientific study up to the present time and is put up in convenient and economical form, easy to take, easy to carry, is the famous Cascarets. Five years ago marked the time of the sale of the first box. Last year the sale reached the enormous total of over six million boxes. In this hustling, every day, busy life of ours people need just this kind of a medicine to stimulate their bowels and keep them regular. Cascarets act on the liver just enough to help nature without causing that awful sick, weakening feeling that usually follows the taking of Calomel and violent purges. Readers who have never tested the merits of Cascarets should give them a good trial.

His Most Useful Book.

First Passenger—What book has helped you most in life?

Second Passenger—The city directory.

"The city directory?"

"Yes; I'm a bill collector."—Syracuse Herald.

The woman who is in the habit of telling her troubles makes more calls than she receives.—Town Topics.

Laying for Him.

One of the clerks employed at the Reading terminal, who is something of a practical joker, had the tables turned on him the other day by a shrewd newsboy. Knowing that two afternoon newspapers had recently suspended publication, it has been his custom upon leaving his office in the evening to call a newsboy and say: "Here's a nickel. Keep the change and give me a Call, quick!" He thought it great fun to see the eager hands clutch ineffectually for the nickel, and then to note the disappointed expression of the youngster's face. But he tried it once too often. He greeted a boy at Twelfth and Market streets on Wednesday evening with his usual witticism, and, much to his astonishment, the little fellow shoved a Call into his hands and grabbed the coin before the astonished clerk knew what was up. Then there was nothing for the joker to do but take his medicine. "I've been a-layin' fer dat guy," remarked the boy. "He wanted a Call, an' he got it. Dat paper was six mont's old."—Philadelphia Record.

Always Caught.

If a young man goes into a jewelry store to look at ladies' rings, the worst gossip in town is sure to step in and catch him at it.—Atchison Globe.

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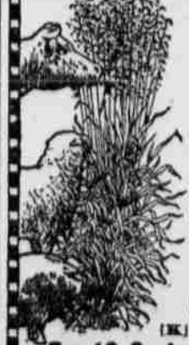

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