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Parker's Private Secretary.

THE story I am about to tell relates to an incident in the history of England furny, too?" which is but little known, and which you will not find in books, but one which nevertheless had a great effect on her destinies.

About the beginning of this century, while the Revolutionary wars were raging, communication in eigher was naturally very prevalent; and ingenuity was taxed to the utmost on one hand to invent, and on the other to detect the medium used in secret correspondence. As a rule, the decipher had beaten the cipher, and no known method was secure of detection. If conventional signs merely were used, the recurrence of the different symbols gave a key easily followed out. Some lugenious spirits correspond by reference to the pages and lines of particular editions of booksmethods, although they might preserve the secret, disclosed what was often quite as dangerous, that there was a secret. I am about to tell you of a plan which for a long time was not only undetected but unsuspected.

It was at that time when the first Napoleon had assembled his fleet and transports at Brest, with the ostensible and is generally believed the real view, of making a descent on England. The greatest procautions were observed by the English government in regard to correspondence from France, and an amount of espoinage was practiced at the post office, which left Sir James Graham's subsequent performances in that line far behind. The national excitement was intense, and the political departments of the government were administered with an iron sway.

My uncle, Sir George Trevor, was, as the world then knew, high in the Admiraltyand as it was from him that I heard this anecdote, its veracity may be depended on.

The despatches to and from the Admiralty were the subject of the gravest vigilance, and the most stringent regulations. The clerks were not permitted to send or receive letters which were not first submitted to the chief clerk; and it was believed that letters addressed even to private residences were frequently opened at the post office.

At the time I speak of, the chief clerk was an elderly man of the name of Parkera wizened, wiry, dapper individual, so imbued with the official tincture of Whitehall that it had become second nature to him. He lived and breathed and thought and slept solely for the Admiralty, and knew no other pleasure or care. He was withal a genial and kindly soul, keen and energetic in the affairs of his office, and in all others a mere child.

He had assumed as his private secretary a young fellow by the name of Beaumont, who was one of the most promising subordinates in the establishment. He was modest and unassuming, very good-looking, with a countenance and an air suggestive of depression and melancholy. He was evidently of good education, and probably well born also, for his manners were easy and indicated good breeding. He was a native of Jersey, and had been introduced to the notice of the Admiralty authorities by some influential member of Parliament. He was much liked in the office and discharged his duties to perfection.

One morning Parker presented himself before my uncle with a visage pale with woe and trembling with excitement.

"Why, what is the matter, Parker? Has Bonaparte come ?"

"He may have, for aught I know," said "Things are all wrong, Sir Parker. George !"

"What is wrong?"

"The letters are wrong. There is a spy among us. I have known it for a long time, now I am quite sure ; but I cannot find him

out." Parker went on to explain that he had for some time suspected that some one in the office communicated their private information and despatches outside. He had redoubled his precautions; but more than ever confirmed in his suspicious; was entirely baffled in his endeavors to detect the culprit.

"But Parker," said my uncle, "how do !

have transpired?"

"By the funds, Sir George. They answer to the news as surely as the bell down stairs answers to the bell-rope. I find them going up and down as if they were sitting in the office," said Parker, personifying the stock exchange for a moment.

Have all the letters to the clerks been examined strictly."

"Yes; I read them all myself-"

"Find nothing in them?"

"Mighty little. Some are from home and some from friends; but most of them from sweethearts," said Parker, twisting his face into a grim smile, and funny things they say in them.

"And the young men's letters. Are they

"They are more careful like, as they know I am to see them ; but Lord save you, sir, they are all stuff; not a ha'porth of

"This matter must be seen to," said my uncle ; I have had my own misgivings on the same subject. Bring me all the letters which come to and are sent by the clerks for the next week. There is no reason why you should have all the funny things to yourself."

So my uncle had the letters for a week, and found them very much such as Parker had described them. The suspicious symtoms increased; the stock exchange responded more sensitively than ever; but not the slightest ground for suspecting any one transpired. My uncle was bewildered, and Parker was rapidly verging to insanity.

"It is certainly not the clerks," said my uncle. "There is no reason there," said he, pushing back the letters of the day. "By the way, how does young Bennet get She seems a nice creature, that sister of his, to judge by her letters."

"He is the best haud in the office, by a long sight, and his sister is a very lady-like creature. They are orphans, poor things, and he supports her out of his aslary. She called at the office two months ago, and I gave him leave to see her for a few moments in my room. But he knew it was against the rules, and has not seen her here | cannot be too cautious in this matter !"

again."
"But what are we to do?" said my uncle. "I think I will speak to the First Lord.

So he spoke to the First Lord, who thought the affair serious enough.

"It must be in the letters," said he. "It cannot be in the letters," said my

"As you please," said the chief; "but, although you cannot find it there perhaps

another can. I would try an expert." My uncle had no faith in experts or Bowstreet runners, and mistrusted them. But he could not refuse to try the experiment. So the most experienced decipherer in London was summoned into council, and to him the letters of the day were secretly submitted.

He read them all very carefully, looked at them in the light and looked at the light through them. At last he threw them all aside, excepting one from Elinor Beaumont.

"Who is the lady that writes this?" said the taciturn man of skill at last. "A very sweet young woman," said

Parker smartly; "sister of my prviate secretary."

" Does she write often?"

"Yes; she is his only correspondent, and writes about twice a week." "Where does she live?"

"She lives in Jersey, Beaumont told me. Their father was in business there.'

"And does she always write about the same sort of things-aunt's rheumatism, picnics, squire's tea parties, and the like ?" "Much the same, excepting when she

speaks of Beaumont himself." "Hum !" said the expert.

"Well, sir," said my uncle who was rather impatient of the man of skill's pom_ posity, "and what may 'hum' mean? Have the young woman and her aunt's theumatism done the mischief?"

"Hum! She dates from Fleet street?" "And why should should she not date from Fleet street ?"

"I should be sorry to prevent her," said the unmoved philosopher. "Has this correspondence continued long?"

"Oh, yes-a couple of years or so, but not nearly so regularly as lately."

"For how long regularly?" "About two months."

"That is, about the time when you first suspected the betrayal of confidence?"

"Really, my friend, if you can't see farther into a millstone than that, you may give up the profession," said my uncle. "Take my word for it, the Beaumonts have nothing to do with it. Rubbish !"

"Hum?" And with that the man of chasing, and despatching of government

would return in two days, however, it was five before he came back, and was closeted with my uncle and Parker, with whom he had fallen in great disfavor.

"Wants to make a job," said the latter

is a regular humbug." "Sir George," said the regular humbug, "has Beaumont a locked desk in his room?,, "Yes, sir," said Parker, "he has."

"Have you a key which will open it?" "I have-and what of that?"

"I wish to have that desk opened without his knowledge, and the contents brought to me."

"And on what pretense," said my uncle," do you propose to put this insult on a man against whom there is no reasonable ground of suspicion, and who has not been allowed to speak for himself?"

"There need be no insult for he will know nothing of it; neither will any one

"I will not permit it, sir." "Hum! Then I can do no more in the

"But," said Parker, whose official notion made him unwilling to break off the negotiations in this manner, "what pretence have you for doing this to Beaumont and not to the other clerks !"

"Shall I tell you? There is no such persons as Elinor Beaumont, and the address in Fleet street is a notorions haunt of shspected foreigners."

"Good gracious!" said my uncle, changing color, "you don't say that?"

"It is the fact; but you will see the necessity of being cautious and silent in the matter. Detection hangs on a thread, as it stands, and a whisper will break it."

"What do you mean," said Parker, "about Elinor Beaumont? I have seen

"There is no Elinor Beaumont in Jersey, I sent and have ascertained the fact." "I am sure there is some mistake about

all this, which Beaumont can clear up. Let us send for him."

"If you do the game is up. I trust, in fact, he does not know of my visits. We

"Pedantic ass, "muttered my uncle; "but I suppose we had better give him his own way. If you meet Parker and me here at seven to-night, we shall have this wonderful desk opened, and your great discoveries shall be made."

They met again that evening. The desk was opened by Parker, and a bundle of letters, carefully packed up, all from Elinor Beaumont, and a quantity of circulars, playbills, and shop receipts were handed to the expert.

l'hat gentlemai and seemed much struck by the last.

"Read that," said he, handing it to my uncle. As the letter is important, I give it entire :

120 FLEET STREET, Sept. 24, 1803. My DEAR CHARLES-Although we had an adverse wind all the way, we made without difficulty the port we were bound for. My aunt, in spite of the weight of her fifty years, enjoyed the trip much and is ready to sail again. I hope you will think of sending the line you promised on the 25th, and come yourself, as our party is now much smaller, and we should enjoy the visit. When I was in London last week I saw your cousin Harry, fresh from Windsor. There is but little change to be observed in him, not as much as you would expect. Come to us on Friday.

Yours very affectionately, ELINOR B.

My uncle read this out loud, from beginning to end, and then he said : "Do you see anything suspicious in that? It seems to be very innocent."

"Humph! It may be. Was there anything else in the desk ?" said he, address-

ing Parker.
"You may go and look," growled that potentate; and he led the way, the expert tollowing.

The desk was quite empty, with the exception of two or three scraps of paper. On one of these the expert pounced, and returned with an air of elation to the other room. He then unfolded this scrap of paper, disclosed a half sheet exactly the size of the paper on which Elinor Beaumont's letters were written, in which oblong holes at intervals had been cut.

He then placed this half-sheet over the letter, and handed both, thus placed, to my uncle, whose astonished eyes read the following words, which the holes left visible.

"Fleet wind-bound. Fifty sail of the line. Twenty-five smaller. Should the wind change, expect us on Friday." "The devil !" said my uncle ; "and Nel-

son ordered off to the West Indies." Then was there, as you may suppose, hurrying and scurrying, and running and

carrier pigeons and all the old world means of communication then in fashion. The key thus obtained disclosed the whole correspondence, which turned out to be a connected series of letters from the French government, smuggled into Jersey. The rest history knows; the intended invasion was abandoned and Napoleon went else-

where.
"But what put you on the scent?" asked my uncle afterwards, with many apologies to the expert.

"I suspected the trick from the first, although it was a very good specimen of it. The letters were too innocent and had too little point in them. But they were done with admirable skill. The grammar was complete; and the little dots or marks which bunglers use to guide them in writing the words which are to be read were entirely absent. The way in which the deception is effected is this: The correspondence, before commencing, take a sheet of paper and cut holes in it, which, of course, in the two half sheets exactly correspond. They each take one half sheet, and when the letter is to be written, the writer so arranges the words that those intended to be read shall appear in the holes when the half sheet is placed over the paper, which is of the same size. When his correspondent receives his letter, he places his halfsheet over it and reads the words as you did. The difficulty, which was well conquered in this case, is to make the sense

the slightest elew to the real meaning. "My suspicions, once aroused, were confirmed by the inquiries which I made .-The whole story about the sister was a fabrication. The letters did come from Jersey, the answers went to Fleet street, to the charge of very notorious foreign agents. But if our friend had not been fool enough to leave his half sheet in his desk, we might have groped in vain for the mystery.

run fluently and to prevent any visible

break in the writing. Without the half

sheet with the holes in it, no one can have

Beaumont disappeared that night, and was never heard of again at the Admiralty. It transpired afterward that some accomplice had warned him of the expert's visit to the Admiralty, and his enquiries in Jersey. He had made an attempt to get admittance to his room, but was scared by the sounds he heard, and contrived to so escape to France. The lady who acted the sister, and who visited the Admiralty, partly to put the authorities off their guard and probably also to interchange the key to the cipher, was a Parisian celebrity who both before and afterward was renowned for daring in political intrigue.

THE MERRY SIGNOR BLITZ.

SIGNOR BLITZ, the eminent magician whose fame is national, has just published a book entitled "Fifty years in the Magic Circle;" containing an account of his curious career. We quote the following anecdote:

While chatting with a few friends, one Saturday afternoon in the M. S. Hotel at Hartford, a clerical gentleman of mild demeanor entered and examined the register, for he was expecting, as he observed, a brother minister, to officiate in his pulpit the following morning. One of the gentlemen present, of a humorous disposition, remarked to me that it was the Rev. Mr .----, of a neighboring village, to whom he was desirous I should be introduced. I endeavored pleasantly to decline the honor, as I concluded the introduction would not be profitable or agreeable to either of us, on account of the decided impression I entertained in regard to his physiolgical developments, which ultimately proved my sagacity; but my friend B., one of the old Knickerbockers of Hartford, was irresistible, and I was formally presented, and at the same time requested to perform for his gratification, a particular feat to prove by my skill how the mind and vision could be deluded in the open daylight, independent of all preparations and fixtures. I consented, and succeeded admirably; put the effect upon him was such that without the least hesitation, and in the most abrupt manner, he commenced declaiming against my pursuit, and expressed his opposition to all amusements, considering them frivolous and dangerous to the welfare of mankind.

His words were so unwelcome and ungenerous that I endeavored to convince him to the contrary; and while engaged in this object my attention was directed by a slight of the Peninsula, it now being ascertained pressure upon my back, and placing my hand there, a pack of eards was dropped into it. This was ammunition I little expected, and I determined to use it to the best advantage.

"Why, sir," I said to the dominio, you

you come to be so sure that your secrets skill took his hat and departed, saying he couriers, and semaphore telegraphs, and are the last person to take exceptions, or speak unfavorably of innocent recreation, when you, a minister of the Gospel carry cards about with you, to play your games in some sly corner, perhaps for drinks and money!

"What's that you say, sir? I have cards! You are insane !" he spiritedly exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, you are entirely mistaken. Signor," cried the wag, my confederate; 'for Mr. --- is a strict, unwavering orthodox preacher."

"That may be." I answered; "but he plays cards nevertheless; he has them in his pocket now," and to prove my assertion, I drew a quantity from the shawl round his neck, and with great rapidity deposited the balance in his pocket.

The reverend gentleman looked confused and serious ; my droll assistant, Mr. C --declared I was in error, and at the same time put me in posession of the backgammon box and dice.

"Will you satisfy all present, and myself, that you have no cards in your pocket?" I resolutely demanded.

"Oh, yes! with pleasure; because I despise such articles," he reiterated, as he thrust his hands into his pockets, from which he drew the cards, the appearance of which covered him with confusion.

I immediately exclaimed, "I knew I was right! and that is not all. You are an expert gambler, for look here." I continued. taking the hat from his head, out of which tumbled the box and dice.

"This so completely nonplussed him that for a few moments he was powerless of speech. Recovering himself, however, he moved towards the door, and speaking in a severe tone, said :

"You'll do, sir ! you'll do!" and quickly

left for the street. The effect upon all was intensely rich and memorable, and no one better appreciated the incident than myself; but without the involuntary aid of my mischieveous friend, I could not have triumphed so successfully. The story spread far and near, and gave rise to great mirth; and an editor of one of the city papers, the Times, published in his daily issue that the clergyman would not have been more surprisd if he had found a sheep in the pocket.

Killing a Stuffed Coon.

N a thriving little village in one of the wide valleys of Pennsylvania, an old coon hunter has lived several years. On a beautiful moonlight night after some of the friends of this affable gentleman had left his house, they resolved to have a little fun at the hunters expense. After discussing for some time as to the best way of doing it they at last hit upon the following plan. A coon skin was procured and so stuffed that its shape would resemble in every respect the living animal.

This was placed upon the limb of a tree, and when all things were ready one of the party informed the hunter that a coon could be seen on the limb of a tree about onetourth of a mile from his residence. He at once came to the place, and heard a noise near the spot mentioned by his friend, and was fully convinced that precious game was near at hand. Without making any excitement, and taking things coolly, as all good sportsmen do, he quietly shouldered the gun and took with him Jack, his favorite dog, and proceeded with all speed to the tree upon which the animal was to be found. One of the party prepared to shake the coon down. "No," said the hunter, get out of the way and let me have the pleasure of shooting it. He took aim and fired, and down it came. Jack gave it a shake and walked away, when the old hunter stepped up and gave it a kick, and said, "Dead! dead!" He gave it second punch and a brick-bat fell out. He then discovered the sell and left for his home, being fully' determined to retaliate at some future time.

A peculiar tree, called the tallow-tree, grows in China, the fruit of which contains a seed covered with a white, solid, fatty matter, which the natives convert into candles. It is proposed to introduce this tree into South Carolina, the south of France. and Algeria, where there is every prospect of its being successfully cultivated. In China, it forms vast forests, and gives rise to a considerable branch of local commerce. The Government of British India has introduced it throughout the different regions that it grows equally as well in the Punjaub and northwest provinces as in China. The fatty matter produced by the tree favorably compares with the finest tallow, and when manufactured into candles, burns with a clear white flame of great brilliancy, and emits no smoke or disagreable odor.