

Trapping a Spy.

BY M. QUAD.

THE next morning I held a consultation with my chief and others, and learned that my man had disappeared in a quarter of the city where resided several families strongly suspected of aiding the Confederates by collecting and sending them information. This was something of a clue to aid me in finding him again, as he would naturally be in collusion with the suspected families. If I did not again encounter him at the hotels or cafes, I must hunt the suspected neighborhood until catching him going or coming. Not believing that he would connect "the captain" with the note of warning, I did not change my disguise again for two or three days.

I called at the hotels, went to the theatres, dropped in at saloons, visited several gambling dens, and at the end of the third day had failed to find him. This convinced me that he was "keeping dark," and had adopted some other method of securing knowledge. Thinking he might avoid the military, I resumed my citizen's dress, and as a last change had a "clean shave," removed the court-plaster, and came out as a young man with plenty of money and little to do. In this capacity, I visited the department offices, the capitol, all the places of amusement, and strolled up, and down, and around, and used up three days more without again catching sight of my man.

I had almost come to the conclusion that he had left the city, when I found him. I was within a block of where I had fallen over the negro's cart, and it was the middle of the afternoon, when I concluded to take a lunch, and hurried into the first place I could see which had a sign out. It proved to be a very popular resort of idlers, as well as hungry people. The room was well filled with army men and citizens; waiters were passing around with stews and wine, and the proprietors were evidently doing a good business. I sat down at the only vacant table, took up a paper and waited for some one to serve me. When the waiter came, I said "oysters," without raising my eyes from the paper, and could not have told whether he was black or white.

When the man came back with the dish, he tripped over one of my feet, and although he placed the dish on the table without having spilled its contents, the spoon was shaken out and dropped under the table. He stooped down to pick it up, and my eyes left the paper to see a mole below the right ear! He was gone after another spoon before I had drawn two breaths, but I was then just as sure that I had found my spy as I was the night I saw him searched in the Old Capital Prison. There was hardly a chance that he would recognize me in my new role, and so when he came back I had a good look at him. There could be no mistake. He had an apron on, his jewelry was gone, his auburn mustache had been to the barber's for a change to black, but his face was the face of a spy, and the mole was there as a clincher. The warning had only served to render him a little more prudent. He had deserted the hotels, and taken a place in the service of a citizen who was no doubt in the "ring," thinking in this way to baffle further efforts to hunt him down. Looking around the room and listening a moment to the conversation, I was convinced that my man had lost nothing by the change. There were a dozen captains and colonels in the place, all talking in loud tones, and all any one need do to secure information was to listen. Some of them were wagering that the army would move in a month, some were talking of peace, others hinted that a great cavalry raid was about to come off, and each one seemed anxious to tell all he knew, and a great deal more.

Looking from spy to spy, I saw that each one was a close listener. I sat so that I could see behind his bar, and during a moment when he had no customer, I saw him making pencil marks on a card in a sly manner. One of the officers had just blurted out that thirty thousand volunteer troops were expected to arrive in Washington during the first week in March, and I believe that the bar-tender jotted down the statement. If I had gone over to the officer and reproached him with being imprudent or criminally reckless, the chances were that I would have been knocked down for what he and his brother officers would have termed my "d-d impudence." So I watched.

During the half hour required for me to eat my stew and drink a glass of beer, I saw enough to convince me that I had stumbled on the head quarters of the Washington secessionists. Having found them, how was I to go to work to break up the rascals? I might have them arrested, but how about the proofs? If I could trip up my old "Captain Elliott," there was hope that some hold could be had on the others; and so I began planning as I sat there. Idling up to the bar at last, I purchased a cigar, and inquired of the man if he knew of a place where I could secure board.

"Are you a stranger in Washington?" he inquired by way of reply.

"Yes, quite so," I replied. "I have

only been here a short time (a fact), and do not like my present place. I should like to get into a private family."

He asked my business, and when I told him that I was connected with the War Department (another fact), I thought his manner underwent a change. He lighted a cigar, motioned me to a seat, and suddenly grew quite talkative.

"I don't know but what I can recommend you a nice place," he remarked; "a private family of five or six, with two or three handsome daughters as you ever looked at."

"I guess that'll do," I replied. "All I want is a quiet place. I am so infernally drove with business, in business hours, that I want peace outside of hours. Times are very exciting now, as the army is to make a big move soon."

"Is that so?" he ejaculated, his face exhibiting his surprise. "What sort of a move will it be?"

"I can't tell for three or four days yet, but will know then, as I make it a point to keep closely posted on all military and naval matters."

The man was perfectly delighted. I was just the pigeon he had been looking for. He regretted that a business engagement called me away, but told me that if I would drop around at the same hour next day, he would have everything fixed for my installation into the comforts of a private household. I went out of the saloon, feeling that I had spread a net that would envelop the entire gang, known and unknown, at the proper time, if I only played my card skillfully.

Calling upon the chief, I gave him a full report, and was again told to go ahead and work up the matter as I thought best, depending on me for anything you want. He had heard nothing in regard to the character of the cafe, but my story convinced him that it was a headquarter place for gathering information. Both of us were morally certain that the bartender was about to secure me board in one of the suspected families, that they might have a handy source of information, and he gave me some valuable hints about my conduct and the report which I was to concoct in regard to army movements.

If possible, he desired me to secure knowledge of every disloyal family in the city, and collect proofs enough to warrant the arrest of all the prominent ones.

In the afternoon, about the same hour as before, I sauntered into the cafe, and received a cordial greeting from Payton, the bar-tender. As soon as he got a moment to spare, he informed me that he had made all arrangements for a place in the family spoken of—the one with the two handsome daughters; I was to go around with him right away and perfect arrangements. He further informed me that he was a boarder at the same house, as was also "Captain Elliott," the spy with the mole. He did not mention his name as Captain Elliott, simply giving the name without the title. Nothing could suit me better than the way he had arranged matters, and so we walked around to the house together. There are new tenants there now, and the reader will please excuse me for not being exact as to the location.

Going into the house, which was a comfortable brick residence, I was introduced to the mistress as "M. Warner, that clerk in the War Department whom I spoke of."

It is not the rule, I believe, for landlords to shake hands with prospective boarders, ask after their health, and smile winsome smiles; but my landlady was an exception. It is a rule, I believe, for landladies to set a price for board, to point out rooms and declare them the best in the city, and all that; and here my landlady was another exception. Not a word was said about money, and I found my room all that could be desired. She was a widow, she said, her "lamented" having been dead many years. She had two daughters, Celia and Orphia, but both were away from home just then. Not a word was said about the war, no questions were asked me, and in an hour I had taken full possession of my room. At supper, the widow, Payton, Elliott and myself were the only ones present, as was the case during several succeeding meals.

At length, in a day or two, we began to get somewhat acquainted, and then I began to see signs of the net which was to envelop me. The man and the lady commenced talking about the war, asking after news, and seemed very desirous of learning all that was going on. I was prepared for them, and when I now look back and remember some of my statements, I can only wonder that they did not either believe me a great liar or fathom my intentions to trap them. I hinted at hundreds of thousands of new troops, of immense purchases of war material in Europe, of contemplated raids, of great naval movements, every assertion made was received as gospel truth. And why not? I was a "confidential clerk in the War Department," and who should know better than I?

For a day or two, I wondered some one of the three did not make notes of the Confederacy, and then the query was answered. There was a veranda running along the rear end of the house, the floor on a level with the sills of the second story windows, and it was my practice to take a seat on the

veranda every evening after five o'clock, smoke a cigar, and look over the daily papers. The two men always returned to the cafe, but the widow frequently occupied a chair near me.

One evening, when I was half an hour late in taking my seat, I found her chair vacant of everything except a memorandum book. I could discover nothing of the widow, and it [was] but the work of a moment to pocket the memorandum and return to my room. There are readers who will feel contempt for me after this statement, but with that I have nothing to do. I admitted at the start that I was a spy, and am making these articles mere statements of facts. Spies may have honor in their actions or may not—circumstances have a great deal to do with this. Perhaps my offence was no greater than the offence of her who had been making notes of my news.

About twenty pages of the little book had been written over, and as I have it before me now, I make the following extracts:

"JANUARY 19th.—Sent letters to five of our friends to-day. Sent them by the same friend as before. The information will enable our folks to thwart the movements, I hope.

"JANUARY 20th.—Sent two more letters to-day, full of valuable information. Two of our spies left to-day, having incurred suspicion. We have, however, a number left, who are securing all the news afloat.

"JANUARY 23d.—Elliott has been warned away, but will not go. He will change his programme. Celia and Orphia left to-day to carry the letters through. They will have no trouble in reaching Centerville. Mr. Stevens brought us several letters to-day. Our people are sanguine of victory when spring opens."

Something had been written almost every day, and turning over the leaves, I found this entry:

"JANUARY 26th.—A clerk in the War Department is coming here to-morrow as a boarder. Mr. Payton thinks we will be able to get much valuable news from him."

There were figures and jottings on other leaves, to show that the woman had taken my exaggerated statements for the foundation of several letters which she had dispatched through to the Confederates. In fact, during the two hours in which I looked the book over before locking it up, I learned more of the Confederate spy system in Washington than I ever knew before. The book itself was proof enough to warrant the arrest of the whole party, but I determined to wait a while longer. I wanted to catch a dozen others, if possible.

As stated in the book, it was an easy matter for the young ladies to pass through the lines to Centerville. All they had to do was to secure a pass, a very easy matter in those days for any resident of Washington, who would affirm that they had friends beyond the lines. It was also easy enough for any of the farmers or milkmen to act as mail carriers. Acting on this assumption, I determined to watch the milkman a little. I had seen him enter the house two or three times, had once detected the widow holding a confidential conversation with him, and I made up my mind that he was the "Mr. Stevens" mentioned in the book. He came every morning about eight o'clock. We had breakfast at nine, and as near as I could learn, the widow was never out of bed until half past eight. If he left any letters, he must leave them with the servant girl, or on the hall table.

The next morning I was at the head of the hall stairs when the man rang the bell. In a moment more the girl went to the door, pal in hand. Three minutes after, she came back, and I saw a small package in her hand. She turned it over two or three times, seemed as if she would like to open it, and then stooped down and hid it under the hall-tree, and went off to the kitchen. In less than a minute I had slipped down, secured the package, and was back in my room. As expected, the package was a bundle of letters, seven in all, and each one written by some one in the Confederate army, or by a secessionist citizen beyond the lines. They spoke of receiving information from the lady and her spies, mentioned the arrival of the daughters, and one writer advised the lady to be prudent and discreet, and collect all the information possible.

It was certain that the book and the letters would be missed, and I did not know but that I might be suspected. I was therefore late at breakfast that morning, the men having gone away before I entered the dining-room. One glance at the lady assured me of her trouble. She was pale and nervous, but her conversation did not imply a suspicion of my actions. She said nothing however about the book and letters, but I could see her troubled mind in her every action. Strolling about that forenoon, I encountered the servant girl, who told me that the hall had been robbed that morning, and that she had been discharged for her carelessness in leaving the door unlocked. Knowing more about the "robbery" than she or her mistress, I gave the girl money to pay her fare to Baltimore, where she had relatives.

At dinner-time, in order to avoid suspicion, I concocted the most exaggerated story that I had yet dared to tell. It was February, and I told them that the army would move in less than two weeks, while a fleet of fifty vessels was fitting out for a start within five days. "Now troops were

on their way to Washington from half a dozen Northern States, and I "heaped up" the story, until all of them were in a tremor of excitement. I was a little impatient to wind up my task, and was determined to urge on matters so that I could spring the trap. I was pretty positive that the milkman would have information to carry to his friends next, and I must effect his capture. I had learned that he lived out on Fairfax Road, beyond our picket line, and was permitted to continue his business because he had voluntarily taken the oath of allegiance to the government, and was known to the army as a Union man whose property must not suffer from raiders.

Going to the chief's office, I made a report of my actions and stated my intention to capture Stevens. I was offered every assistance, but asked for nothing except a horse, being quite sure that I could trap the mail-carrier alone. Taking the horse to a livery stable near to Long Bridge, I left orders to have him saddled at eight o'clock the next morning, and that was all the preparation necessary. At tea-time I had very little to relate, stating that I should be able to give them great news on the third day after. I made a hasty meal, and took care not to return in the evening until all in the house were asleep. Fearing that I might oversleep myself, I remained awake all night, and was at the head of the stairs when the milkman came. The lady was waiting for him this time, and after she had called him inside and shut the door, I saw her hand him a packet of letters. He unbuttoned his shirt, dropped the parcel into his bosom, and then made his departure.

Everything had worked as I anticipated, and now to catch him. Without stopping to eat breakfast, and leaving the house without attracting the attention of any one, I hurried to the stable, mounted my horse, and then rode to the picket-line and beyond, having a pass which would take me through the lines of the army at any point. It was perhaps ten o'clock before I saw Stevens coming back. His horse was jogging along, his wagon rattling, and the man himself was the last one to be suspected.

"Hold on a minute, Mr. Stevens!" I commanded, as his vehicle came opposite my position.

He halted suddenly, looked at me in great surprise, and then asked what I wanted.

"I want you, sir!" I replied, going close up to the cart. "I arrest you for a spy, or the next thing to it—for being a Confederate mail-carrier!"

I reached out my hand and laid it on his leg as I spoke the words, being right behind the wheels of the wagon. He seemed to comprehend the situation in an instant. Looking all around, and seeing us only, he made a movement with his hand, I heard the click of a pistol, and the next instant a blaze of fire shot into my face, the horse jumped and I was knocked down and run over.

It was a minute or two before I found out whether I was dead or alive. The ball from his pistol had missed my head, and the wheel had only bruised me. I felt no pain, owing to the excitement, and sprang to see him lashing his horse into a free gallop. In a moment more I was mounted and in pursuit.

CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.

Couldn't Drink Wine.

That was a noble youth who, on being urged to take wine at the table of a famous statesman in Washington, had the moral courage to refuse. He was a poor young man, just beginning the struggle of life. He brought letters to the great statesman, who kindly invited him home to dinner.

"Not take a glass of wine?" echoed the statesman's beautiful and fascinating wife, as she arose, glass in hand, and with a grace that would have charmed an anchorite, endeavored to press it upon him.

"No," said the heroic youth, resolutely, gently repelling the proffered glass.

What a picture of moral grandeur was that! A poor friendless youth refusing wine at the table of a wealthy, famous statesman, even though proffered by the fair hands of a beautiful lady.

"No," said the noble young man, and his voice trembled and his cheek flushed "I never drink wine, but (here he straightened himself up and his words grew firmer) if you've got a little good old rye whiskey, I don't mind trying a snifter!"

Up in a Pennsylvania town, they had many years ago a bank that was seized with a prevailing epidemic. The premonitory symptoms, in the form of a run, alarmed the officers, and they saw the bills coming in and the silver and gold flowing out. Pat came in with the rest, and pulling out three ten-dollar bills, begged the favor of three gold eagles for the same. The President of the bank was standing by, and said to Pat.

"Why, those bills are better than the specie."

"Be sure I and, by Jabers, it was wanted you to have the best, my darlin', that I brought 'em to yer's."

And taking the gold he walked away, quite content with letting the bank have the rags.

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