The Lost Cipher.

By STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

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On Aug. 15, 1601, returning from mission to England I sailed from Dover and crossing to Calais without mishap anticipated with pleasure the king's satisfaction when he should hear the result of my embassy, and learn from my mouth the just and friendly sentiments which Queen Elizabeth entertained toward him.

Unfortunately I was not able to impart these on the instant. During my ubsence a trifling matter had carried the king to Dieppe, whence his anxiety on the queen's account, who was shortly to be brought to bed, led him to take the road to Paris. He sent word to me to follow him, but necessarily some days elapsed before we met; an opportunity of which his enemies and mine were quick to take advantage, and that so insidiously and with so much success as to imperit not my reputation only but his happiness.

tainebleau, leaving summoned the king thither. Ferret, his secretary, however, awaited me with a letter, in which Henry, after expressing his estre to see me, bade me nevertheless stay in Paris a day to transbusiness. "Then," he continued, "come to me, my friend, and we will discuss the matter of which you know. In the meantime send me your papers by Ferret, who will give you a Tecelot for them."

Suspecting no danger in a course which was usual enough, I hastened to comply. Summoning Malgnan, who, whenever I traveled, carried my portfolio, I unlocked it, and emptying the papers in a mass on the table, handed them in detail to Ferret. Presently, to my asionishment. I found that one, and this the most important, was missing. I went over the papers again, and again, and yet again. Still it was not to be

Whenever I traveled on a mission of importance I wrote my dispatches in



I Handed Them in Detail to Ferret.

Importance: in ordinary characters, that is, in a cipher to which the council possessed the key, or in a cipher to which only the king and I held keys. This last, as it was seldom used, was rarely changed; but it was my duty, on my return from each mission, immediately to remit my key to the king, who deposited it in a safe place until another occasion for its use arose.

portfolio with the other papers, but in ogain sealed with my own signet whenever I had occasion to use the cipher. I had last seen the envelope at Calais, when I handed the portfolio to Maignan before beginning my Journey to Paris; the portfolio had not since been opened, yet the sealed packet was missing. More than a little uneasy, I recalled

Maignan, who had withdrawn after delivering up his charge. "You rascal!" I said with some heat. "Has this been out of your custody?" 'The bag?" he answered, looking at

have cut your finger, my lord," he said. "Silence!" I said, "and answer me. Have you let this bag out of your pos-

This time he replied straightforwardly that he had not.

'Nor unlocked it?"

That was true; and as I had at bottom the utmost confidence in his fidelity. I pursued the inquiry no farther in that direction, but made a third search among the papers. This also failing to bring the packet to light, and Ferret being in haste to be gone, I was obliged for the moment to put up with the loss, and draw what comfort I could from the reflection that no dispatch in ever had stolen it, therefore, another could be substituted for it and no one the worse. Still I was unwilling that the king should hear of the mischance from a stranger, and be led to think me careless; and I bade Ferret be slient about it unless Henry missed the packet, which might not happen before

my arrival. When the secretary, who readily assented, had given me his receipt and gone, I questioned Maignan afresh and more closely, but with no result. He had not seen me place the packet in the portfolio at Calais, and that I had done so I could vouch only my own memory, which I knew to be fallible. In the meantime, though the mishance annoyed me, I attached no great importance to it, but anticipating that a word of explanation would satisfy the king, and a new cipher dispose of other paired by physic and injurious medidifficulties, I dismissed the matter from my mind.

in the midst of my last preparations at | cents a bottle.

tend his majesty; an order couched in the most absolute and peremptory terms, and lacking all those friendly so brief and formal-and so needless, at this moment when I had no reason to expect a reverse of fortune, it had all the effect of a thunderboit in a

clear sky. I stood stunned, the words which I was dictating to my secretary dying on my lips. For I knew the king too well, and had experienced his kindness too lately to attribute the harshess of the order to chance or forgetfulness; and, assured in a moment that I stood face to face with a grave crisis. I found myself hard put to it to hide my feelings from those about me. Nevertheless, I did so with an effort:

and, sending for the courier, asked him an assumption of carelessness. what was the latest news at court. His answer, in a measure, calmed my fears, hough it could not remove them. He reported that the queen had been taken

III-or so the rumor went. "Suddenly?" I said. "This morning," he answered.

"The king was with her?" "Yes, your excellency."
"Had he left her long when he sent

his letter? "It came from her chamber, your ex-Hency.

"But-did you understand that her majesty was in danger?" I urged.

As to that, however, the man could ot say anything; and I was left to nurse my conjectures during the long ride to Fontainebleau, where we arrived in the cool of the evening, the last stage through the forest awakening memories of past pleasure that combated in vain the disorder and apprehension which held my spirits. The time at their disposal was in-creased by the fact that when I my apartments, I found a fresh surreached the arsenal I found the Louvre | prise awaiting me in the shape of M. de virgant, the queen, who lay at Fon-tainebjens, syaving summoned the to meet me before my foot was out of the stirrup, announced that he came frm the king, who desired my instant attendance in the queen's closet.

Knowing Concini to be one of those whose influence with her majesty had more than once tempted the king to the most violent measures against her -from which I had with difficulty dissuaded him-I augured the worst from the choice of such a messenger; and wounded alike in my pride and the affection in which I held the king, could scarcely find words in which to ask him if the queen was III.

"Indisposed, my lord," he replied, carelessly. And he began to whistle. I told him that I would remove my boots and brush off the dust, and in

five minutes be at his service.
"Pardon me," he said, "my orders re strict, and they are to request you to attend his majesty immediately. He xpected you an hour ago.

I was thunderstruck at this-at the message, and at the man's manner and for a moment I could scarcely reone of the three modes, according as strain my indignation. Fortunately they were of little, great, or the first the habit of self-control came to my aid in time, and I reflected that an altercation with such a person could only lower my dignity. I contented myself, therefore, with signifying my essent by a nod, and followed him oward the queen's apartments.

In the ante-chamber were several persons, who, as I passed, saluted me with an air of shyness and incertitude which was enough of itself to put me on my guard. Concini attended me to the loor of the chamber; there he fell back, and Mile. Galigai, who was in waiting, announced me. I entered, assuming a erene countenance, and found the king ind queen together, no other person eing present. The queen was lying at ength on a couch, while Henry, seated tool at how feat w gaged in soothing and reassuring her. On my entrance, he broke off and rose

"Here he is at last," he said, barely ooking at me. "Now, if you will, dear heart, ask him your questions. I have had no communication with him, as you know, for I have been with you ince morning."

(To be Continued.)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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my mind.

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the arsenal, handed me an order to at- half-shaped blocks, the uncouth offspring of genius and power born, so to speak, out of the lawful wedlock of letters, which for beauty inexorable reexpressions which the king never falled quires the union of form and of mean-to use when he wrote to me. A missive ling. Having the incommunicable gift of style, won with prodigious effort and for I was on the point of starting—had patience as prodigious, Mr. Stevensor not reached me for years; and coming grew but slowly on his public. It is twenty-one years since he first published and the greater part of his better work was written over ten years ago; yet it is only in the past decade copted. Up to that time he found most of the doors of the present closed to him, because the wards of the key his genius had forged were fitted to the lock which opens the door of far-future

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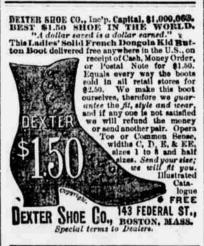
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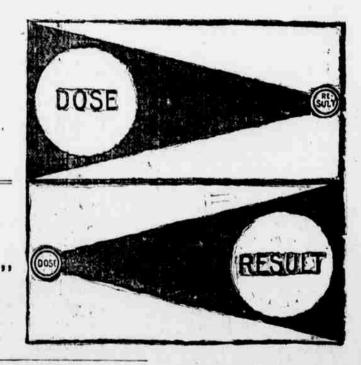
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