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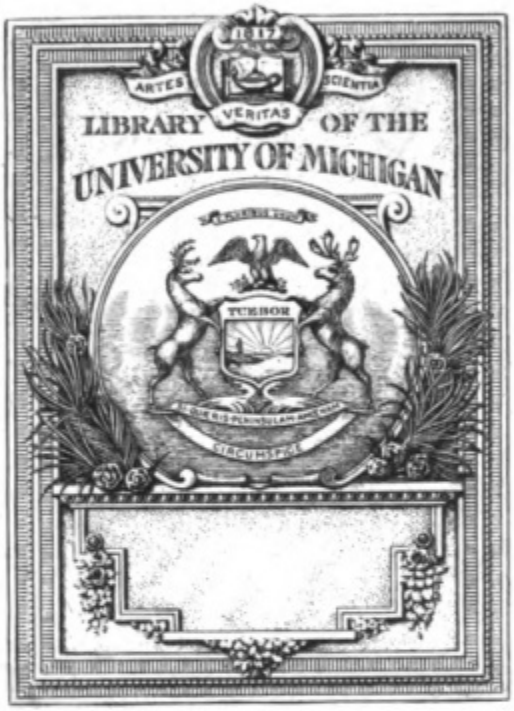

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SECRETS OF THE WHITE LADY

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By CAPTAIN HENRY LANDAU

All's Fair

The Story of the British Secret Service Behind the German Lines

Secrets of the White Lady

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DIEUDONNÉ LAMBRECHT.

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Secrets of THE WHITE LADY

CAPTAIN HENRY LANDAU

O.B.E., CROIX DE GUERRE,
CHEVALIER ORDER OF THE CROWN OF BELGIUM

☆

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK

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PREFACE

DURING the War, nearly all the spies operating immediately behind the German Western Front were of Belgian and French nationality. Some of the information which they collected came through Switzerland; but by far the greater amount of it, because of the proximity of occupied Belgium and France, passed out by way of Holland.

To give a complete historical account of the secret service activities in these occupied territories behind the German lines, involves three stories: that of the directing organizations in Holland, of which the British War Office Service was by far the most important; that of the spies and spy organizations in the enemy territory itself; and, finally, that of the German Counter-Espionage Service, the duty of which was to prevent information of military value from reaching the Allies. In *All's Fair,* I told the first of the three stories; in *Secrets of the White Lady,* the reader will find the remaining two.

When arrests occurred in our secret organizations, they came with lightning rapidity; in most cases, the Allied secret services had no idea what had happened. Where had the indis-

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cretion occurred? Who was responsible? Was it a betrayal? Who was the traitor? These were the questions we anxiously asked ourselves, and for years they remained unanswered. The German Counter-Espionage Service alone held the secret. Recently I have had access to secret records, which at last place the truth at our disposal; the authenticity of these records is unimpeachable. It can well be imagined with what tense interest and excitement I have examined them. All this material, without any attempt to dramatize it, has been incorporated in *Secrets of the White Lady*. For the first time, also, the complete story of German counter-espionage activities in occupied Belgium and France is told—its organization, its methods, the names of its principal agents, stool-pigeons, etc.

Since "The White Lady" was the greatest secret service organization of all times, half of the book has been devoted to it. Except for brief reference in *All's Fair*, its story has never before appeared in print.

All quotations in Parts I and II, and many of those in Part III, have been taken from secret service records which have hitherto been unavailable for publication.

Most of the agents whom I have mentioned worked directly under my supervision—I was their immediate Chief in the field. From Holland I guided their activities—living their lives with them, following them through their dangers. I saw the whole espionage system in perspective, from the spy in the field to the coded telegram in the hands of British General Headquarters. Before writing this book, I revisited the scenes of my secret service activities, interviewed former agents, and collected from them a mass of data and information covering their individual rôles and their personal experiences.

I have not attempted to disguise the names of Allied

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agents. My friends in Belgium and France assure me that if damage could be done by divulging them, it was done years ago, when a complete list of agents' names was published in the various decoration lists. As regards the methods of espionage employed, the public alone has been kept in the dark: the German Secret Police caught enough spies to know how they operated.

H. L.

August 4th, 1935

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CHAPTER I

DIEUDONNÉ LAMBRECHT, HERO AND MARTYR OF LIÈGE

ON a hillside which dominates the city of Liège, lies the suburb of Thier-à-Liège. Here in one of those small brick houses with low, violet-tinted, slate roof, and diminutive garden, so typical of the area, Dieudonné Lambrecht was born, May 4, 1882, and grew to manhood, watched over by his parents, devout Catholics. In addition to giving him the best education their meager purse could afford, they instilled the Christian qualities of that peaceful community.

For a few years he worked in one of the Belgian administrations, but his ardent nature revolted against the narrow, hide-bound, official routine of a government office. With his brother-in-law, he established an engineering workshop, which soon grew into a small factory, producing high grade precision machinery. Happily married, blessed with a small baby girl of four months, a permanent income assured, a keen participator in all church activities, Lambrecht's life was fixed. The vista of a peaceful existence stretched before him.

All this was suddenly changed by the War. Into the turmoil of that conflict went all that he had built up.

He resolved to consecrate his intelligence, his fortune, his influence, his life itself if necessary, to the task of freeing his

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country's soil from the German invader. Naturally, his first thought was to join the Belgian Army.

But, as happened to so many Belgian refugees, as soon as they reached Dutch soil, he was approached by one of the Allied secret service agents who swarmed in Holland at that time. It was into the hands of Afchain, a Belgian in the employ of Major Cameron, chief of an intelligence service connected with British General Headquarters, that Lambrecht fell.

Now a man of thirty-two, his sensitive mind keenly alert, Lambrecht listened attentively to Afchain, weighing how best he could serve his country. It needed little persuasion to get him to return to Belgium for the purpose of organizing an espionage service.

In the Catholic circles of Liège, Lambrecht found support. Two Jesuit priests, Father Dupont, and Father Des Onays, and his brother-in-law, Oscar Donnay, helped him recruit a number of former railway employees. With this band of faithful followers, train-watching posts were soon established at Liège, Namur, and Jemelle, from which all troop movements by rail through these important centers could be observed.

The most dangerous work Lambrecht reserved for himself. In spite of rigid surveillance by the Secret Police, he traveled around the country enrolling new agents and identifying German divisions in the various rest areas. As far afield as Belgian Flanders he went spying and recruiting; he even penetrated into the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. On one occasion, at Jemelle, a heavy westward movement of German troops was in progress for several days from the Eastern Front. Realizing that concentration for an offensive was probably under way, Lambrecht, without hesitation, jumped on the buffer of a

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passing troop train, and accompanied it through the night, until he had definitely established its destination. The very boldness of his act outwitted the German Secret Police—a troop train was the last place to look for a spy, as Lambrecht cleverly realized.

In addition to this hazardous work, he often acted as his own courier, the most dangerous rôle in war-time spying. Slipping past the frontier guards at night, and avoiding the revealing rays of the searchlights, he carried the precious reports, written with a mapping pen on fine tissue paper, and sewed into the interior of the cloth buttons on his clothes, through to Holland. A friend manufactured these buttons in Liège, and it was an easy task to substitute the filling. Good as the concealment was, however, it only protected him in case of a casual search in Belgium itself. Caught at the frontier, his fate would have been sealed—the knives of the German Secret Police would soon have laid bare the compromising contents of those ingenious buttons.

For eighteen months Lambrecht and his faithful assistants kept watch. Night and day, every train passing through the railway centers of Liège, Namur, and Jemelle, every troop movement through Belgium between the Eastern and Western Fronts, was reported to British General Headquarters. These reports definitely announced coming offensives, and were far more valuable than any information obtained from stolen or captured documents. The documents might be false, or the Germans might have changed their plans after the dispatches or orders had been written, but the troop movements were established facts which could not be altered.

To Lambrecht also belongs the credit that he helped to devise these means of controlling troop movements. Train-

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watching posts had never been used in any previous war, and it was the initial reports of such pioneers as Lambrecht which enabled Intelligence Officers at British General Headquarters to work out from the number of constituted units passing by a given train-watching post, their accurate system of gauging the exact volume of a troop movement.

The mass of information transmitted by Lambrecht to British General Headquarters is astonishing.

In May, 1915, for example, his train-watching posts at Jemelle and Namur rapidly and accurately reported the transfer of several German divisions from the Serbian Front to Flanders. This was of vast importance because it was an indication that all the German divisions on the Serbian Front were being transferred to France. In August 1915, his posts caught a heavy movement of troops from the Eastern Front to Champagne. This concentration of troops was intended to parry the offensive which the Germans knew the French were preparing in this sector. As a result of this information, the French advanced the date of their offensive several days.

Lambrecht also accurately reported the German preparations for their attack on Verdun. Much of the information he obtained through the indiscretions of a German major, billeted in his sister's home. But not satisfied with this, he sent agents into occupied France to determine the destination of the troops which were pouring past his train-watching posts in a westerly direction.

The following letter from Afchain, Major Cameron's representative in Holland, dated January 26th, 1916, speaks eloquently for the valuable services rendered by Lambrecht and of the high hopes entertained of him:

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"I have just received a telegram of congratulations from our Chief at British General Headquarters. The 26th Division, which you reported passing through Jemelle, on December 15th, coming from the Eastern Front, has been contacted in the front line.

"Do your best to establish train-watching posts in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, and in occupied France. I know how difficult this will be; but the merit will be all the greater, if you are successful. Knowing your great tenacity, I am sure if any one can succeed, you will."

Events now began to move quickly.

Eighteen months of experience had taught the German Counter-Espionage Service all the tricks used by refugees, and by the Allied secret services, and efficient means had been devised to seal the Belgian-Dutch frontier. In the interior, every Belgian, man and woman, was forced to carry an identity card, with photograph, name, and address attached; and special permission had to be obtained to travel from one town to another. At the frontier, a high-voltage electric wire, a cordon of sentries every hundred yards, mounted patrols, police dogs, and, finally, an army of plainclothes secret police, guarded its entire length.

The Belgian refugees in Holland who had dabbled in secret service could well shut up shop. And it was good riddance—they had exploited the patriotism of their countrymen in the interior, and they had sold their information to the highest bidder among the Allied secret services, sometimes to several of them at the same time. The results cost the life of many a brave man or woman in the occupied territories.

But the secret service game had become a problem even to the official services. After months of fruitless effort many of their representatives were recalled from Holland, to leave the

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field clear for the few who still seemed to have the chance of success. There was a period in 1916 when no information of any kind was coming out of the occupied territory. The Allied secret services had lost their initiative. New methods had to be devised to penetrate the formidable barrier which the Germans had built up at the Belgian-Dutch border.

It was not surprising, then, that Lambrecht found himself suddenly cut off from all communication with Holland. His precious information piled up only to become valueless as the days dragged by. Frantically, he waited for a courier from Holland to pick up his reports at the "letter-box," which he had established in Liège.

In Holland, Afchain was working feverishly to find some means of reaching Liège. He could no longer pick a trusted courier from a dozen volunteers. He would be fortunate if he could find any one at all to undertake the dangerous mission. His chief at British General Headquarters wired him impatiently. He took a risk. Whether he handed a letter for Lambrecht to an intermediary, who was duped, or whether he himself was tricked, is not known exactly. The letter, however, fell into the hands of Keurvers, a Dutchman in the employ of the German Counter-Espionage Service.

Lambrecht's "letter-box" in Liège was a small cigar store owned by one of his relatives, a man called Leclercq. While Leclercq was out Keurvers called at the store and introduced himself to Madame Leclercq as a Dutchman who had just arrived from Holland with an urgent letter for her husband. Madame Leclercq, fully aware of her husband's dangerous activities, was suspicious. This man with his red, bloated face, and small vicious eyes, repulsed her; besides, his accent seemed more German than Dutch. She refused to accept the letter.

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But Keurvers, not to be put off, countered with the password: "The seven boxes of tricolor cigars have arrived safely." Madame Leclercq was nonplussed: she recognized the words, but still she could not bring herself to trust the man. After some hesitation she replied that her husband had told her nothing about the cigars, and that they were not expecting any letters from Holland.

As soon as Keurvers was out of sight, she hastened to Lambrecht with the news. To her surprise, instead of praising her discretion, he scolded her for being overcautious. "He gave the right password, didn't he? What more did you want?" Thoroughly dismayed, she hurried back to the store, where she found Keurvers had returned in her absence and left the letter with her servant together with a message that he would be back the next morning at ten o'clock. The message and the letter were quickly conveyed to Lambrecht.

Lambrecht eagerly opened the small roll containing the letter, and found that it was in Afchain's familiar handwriting. It was dated February 24th, 1916, and contained the following message:

"I confirm the long list of merchandise orders delivered to you, January 28th, care of our friend Dupont (Leclercq's service name), but regret having received no reply.

"Our delivery man, who brought you the above orders, being unable to continue with his duties, I am using the present carrier, who will contact you once a week. I believe he is the only one who can do this at the present moment. I hope you will be able to pull us out of our present critical situation by giving him a report, as complete as possible, of all the merchandise in your store. It is absolutely necessary to make use of the present opportunity, as none of our competitors are in a position to deliver."

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If Madame Leclercq had sowed any doubts in his mind, they were quickly dispelled by Afchain's letter, which was undoubtedly genuine. Lambrecht was ready to welcome Keurvers with open arms, so relieved was he that regular communications with Holland had once more been established. His thoughts immediately turned to the accumulation of six weeks' reports, which he had in his possession. He knew they would be too bulky as they were, and so the night was spent making a résumé of all but the most recent ones.

At ten o'clock next morning, Lambrecht was at the Leclercq cigar store, in the rue de Campine. As he entered, he saw a man in conversation with Leclercq. It was Keurvers. Leclercq immediately called Lambrecht aside into the small parlor at the back of the store. He, too, shared his wife's suspicions of this man. But Lambrecht could not be persuaded: there was Afchain's letter, and the man had given the right password. So Keurvers was called into the back room, and the reports were handed over to him.

On his way home Lambrecht noticed that he was being followed. Such was his trust in Keurvers and his solicitude for his men that his immediate thoughts were not for his own safety, but for that of the courier, and the precious reports in his possession. By jumping on to a passing street car, he managed to get rid of the man who had been following him.

Lambrecht knew that he had a chance of finding Keurvers in one of the cafés on the Grand' Place, for most visitors in the city gravitated to this center. As he looked through the large windows of the Café du Marronnier, he saw Keurvers sitting with Landwerlen and Douhard, two of the German Secret Police, whom Lambrecht knew only too well by sight; they had figured in nearly every spy arrest in the city.

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Instantly Lambrecht knew he was trapped, that the secret police were following him to discover his associates. He had a chance to get away. He had shaken off the man who had been on his trail. He had a number of friends who would gladly have hidden him until an opportunity presented itself to get across the frontier. But Lambrecht decided to return home to advise his wife, and to get her to warn Leclercq. He thought he could get there before the police.

It was a fatal step. As Lambrecht walked in at the front door, the Secret Police were waiting for him on the inside—his wife had been arrested shortly after he had left for his rendezvous with Keurvers. It was known afterwards that the Secret Police had been watching the Leclercq cigar store for several days before Keurvers presented himself there, that they had photographed Afchain's note, and, of course, had understood its meaning. As usual, their object had been to track down associates, and above all to secure the reports—the evidence to convict.

Lambrecht knew he could not save himself. He could, however, save the thirty odd agents who had been working for him. (The Leclercqs did not know their names.) His one care now was not to betray them. Every third degree method familiar to the Germans was employed to break down his resistance, but Lambrecht allowed no name to escape him. He even succeeded in proving to the Secret Police that his wife had no idea he was engaged in espionage activities, and that the Leclercqs did not know the purport of his correspondence with Holland.

His friends did everything within their power to save him. Brand Whitlock, the Marquis de Villalobar, and van Vollenhoven, the various neutral ministers to Belgium, were all per-

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suaded to intercede with von Bissing, the German Governor-General of Belgium. Even the German chaplain of the prison was so moved by the heroic attitude of Lambrecht that he wrote to the German Cardinal von Hartmann, at Cologne, asking him to intervene.

All these efforts were in vain. Lambrecht was condemned to death.

Lambrecht faced his death with sublime resignation. The following letter, written to his wife on the eve of his execution, reveals his nobility:

"April 17th, 1916,
"The citadel of the Chartreuse.

"My well beloved Jeanne:

"I have just been transferred here from the prison of St. Léonard. As I suspected, it was to inform me that the sentence of death, which was passed on the 12th, has been confirmed, and that the various petitions for mercy have been refused.

"God calls me to Him—Let His will be done. We can only but incline ourselves before His supreme wisdom.

"Oh! my well beloved, what a terrible blow to you, who had such high hopes! Poor wife! Poor parents! My soul is filled with intense sadness thinking of you all.

"He who dies is quickly rid of his pain. But for you others, how much suffering! Let my resignation be a comfort to you. May God give you the courage, which He has never ceased to grant me, so that your suffering may be less.

"In heaven, I will watch over you, and will pray to God to reserve for you those happy days which I myself had hoped to provide you. God has not permitted me to do this—let us incline ourselves before His wishes. If He causes us to suffer now, it is but to reward us better later on, when we are near Him.

"Think of my life as having been given up for my country—it will make my death seem less painful to you. After my faith, my country is what I hold most dear; in sacrificing my life for it, I am

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only doing what so many have done before me, and will do again.

"Life passes so quickly here below—it lasts but a moment. We will meet in a better world. It is in moments such as these, through which I have just passed, that one appreciates the inestimable good that parents do their children in giving them a Christian education, and faith in God.

"Console my poor parents for whom the blow is going to be terrible. Draw from your love for me, the necessary force to show them an example of courage.

"Take refuge in prayer, my beloved. I will leave you, as a last souvenir of me, the cross you sent me, and I will place on it kisses for you, Riette, and my parents. I will join to it my wedding ring.

"Jeanne, in heaven we will meet again. For our darling little daughter, for my parents, and for you, receive on this letter, the last affectionate kisses of he, who was

"Your Donné."

Lambrecht was shot April 18th, 1916.

After the Armistice, Lambrecht was posthumously decorated with the O.B.E. by the British, and was mentioned in dispatches by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. King Albert bestowed on him the Chevalier of the Order of Leopold, with *listrés d'or;* he was also mentioned in the order of the day of the nation, and was accorded the Civic Cross, first class.

Valuable as his work had been during the eighteen months he had faithfully served the Allies, it was in death that he exerted his greatest force. His example was an inspiration to others to carry on his work; his friends swore to avenge him, and out of the scattered remnants of his espionage service emerged "The White Lady," the greatest spy organization of the War.

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CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDING OF THE MICHELIN SERVICE

THE Germans lost no time in placarding the walls of Liège with notices of Lambrecht's execution; but, as in the case of Edith Cavell, the psychological effect was the very reverse of what had been intended. Instead of cowing the people, it moved them to defiance. In particular, Lambrecht's followers and friends felt that they had been challenged. It only required a leader to stir them into action, and, as happened so often in history, he appeared from the most unexpected quarter. The man was Walthère Dewé, one of Lambrecht's cousins.

There was nothing in Dewé's appearance, temperament, or mode of living which could in any way have suggested the spy. At this period he was in his thirty-fifth year. He could look back on a life which had been wholly devoted to duty. Born in modest circumstances, the support of his family had fallen on his shoulders at an early age; shortly afterwards he had added the responsibility of a wife and then of two children. Like Lambrecht, he had entered one of the Belgian administrations—that of the Posts and Telegraph. Here, hard work, skill as an engineer, and brilliant executive ability had won for him rapid promotion, until, finally, just before the War, he had been nominated chief engineer of the Liège Tele-

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phone and Telegraph network. In spite of this success, however, he remained a man of simple tastes, one who practiced extreme self-denial, and yet one who remained tolerant of all with whom he came into contact.

His cousin's execution completely diverted Dewé from the ordered, peaceful routine of his life, and plunged him into the excitement and dangers of war-time spying. As Dewé read the execution notice, his duty, both to his country and to the memory of his cousin, came to him with a force which he could not resist. He would carry on Dieudonné's work. Yes, that is what Dieudonné would wish him to do.

Dewé had a wide circle of friends, not only in the Posts and Telegraph administration and among the professional men in the city (most of whom had been his classmates at the University of Liège), but as a staunch Catholic who had participated keenly in all church activities, he also had considerable influence with the priests and religious orders in Belgium. In all these men Dewé inspired confidence. They did not refuse to listen to him, as they would have if some one else had dared to broach the dangerous topic of spying.

Today, so many years after the War, it is difficult to realize what was happening to Belgium in 1914. It was almost impossible to escape from the country to join the Belgian Army. Spying was the only patriotic outlet that remained. Begging only for opportunity, there were many Belgian men and women who were willing to risk their lives, their families, everything they possessed to free their country from the German invader. There was no material reward, and many of the war-time spies, recruited in the occupied territories, were drawn from the noblest of the French and Belgian inhabitants.

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Dewé's soliciting fell on eager ears. He soon rallied to his side a nucleus of patriotic men and women, willing to devote their lives to building up an espionage organization. Of these followers the most important was Chauvin, Professor of Physics at the Institut Montefiore, the well known Liège engineering school. With characteristic generosity Dewé chose Chauvin as his co-chief. The two formed a marked contrast. Dewé, tall, thin, dark, with a black scrubby beard, penetrating blue eyes, the stern features of an ascetic and the character as well as the appearance of a Jesuit priest. Chauvin, on the other hand, about forty years of age, a small man with light hair, a long beard, blue limpid eyes, a voice as soft as that of a woman, and a happy smiling disposition. Dewé commanded respect and admiration; Chauvin attracted affection. The two men were representative of the best brains in Liège.

It required no actual experience in spying for Dewé and Chauvin to know exactly what they were up against. The German system of counter-espionage held few mysteries for them. For two years they had been silent witnesses of the struggle between spy and German Secret Police. In Liège alone, close on fifty spies had been shot, not to mention several hundred who had been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Spy methods and the causes which led up to arrest were common knowledge in Liège. Dewé and Chauvin needed no special penetration to realize that if they were to succeed new methods must be devised.

Their first step was the logical one of investigating the Lambrecht organization. Dewé had been fully aware of his cousin's activities—there had been no secrets between the two cousins, close companions since boyhood—and Father Des Onays, Lambrecht's right-hand man, was one of Dewé's most

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intimate friends. Accordingly, Father Des Onays, and Donnay, another member of the Lambrecht organization, were called in for consultation. Systematically, step by step, the whole history of the Lambrecht Service was examined.

It was immediately evident that Lambrecht had committed two cardinal errors: first, he had courted arrest by undertaking the most dangerous work himself; and second, he had made known his identity to all his agents.

Forthwith Dewé and Chauvin decided that agents, such as couriers, who would be continually exposed to arrest would be completely isolated from the main organization. They also decided to divide Belgium into four sectors, each of which was to be in charge of a head agent who was to organize an independent, separate unit in his area, linked to headquarters in such a way that if his unit became compromised it could be isolated immediately. Dewé and Chauvin undertook to enroll these four head agents through suitable intermediaries, and Father Des Onays was instructed to sound out all Lambrecht's agents and enlist as many as possible in the new organization.

Not satisfied with these precautionary measures, Dewé and Chauvin also proceeded to create a counter-espionage service to watch the German Secret Police. Alexandre Neujean, the Belgian Chief of Police in Liège, was Chauvin's father-in-law; it was to him that they addressed themselves for assistance. During the occupation, the Belgian Civilian Police retained their functions, and, as in peace-time, were responsible for the prevention of crime.

As the Belgian Police were under the control of the German Secret Police, Neujean naturally knew all their members by sight. Not only did he furnish Dewé and Chauvin with photographs of all the German Secret Police stationed in

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Liège, but, as we shall see later, again and again, his timely warnings warded off impending disaster. Above all, on many occasions Neujean helped them to keep clear of that band of stool-pigeons, recruited from the dregs of the Belgian population, on whom the Secret Police largely relied for their information, and who were responsible for most of the arrests. The Belgian spy-patriot could recognize the German by his features and his accent, but he was often thrown off his guard by the Belgian traitor in German pay.

Finally, the new organization needed funds. Many of the agents would work without any pecuniary aid, but some had families to support, and they could not be expected to give up their means of livelihood unless their living expenses were taken care of.

On June 22nd, 1916, Dewé, Chauvin, and Father Des Onays met again. Dewé was able to announce that the Liège banker, Marcel Nagelmackers, had agreed to advance all necessary funds for the time being. Father Des Onays reported that Lambrecht's old train-watching posts at Liège and Jemelle had started working. On this memorable day, the Service was formally founded. For want of a better name, they decided to call it the Service Michelin, a name probably taken from Michelin tires, advertisements for which flooded Belgium before the War. Later, Dewé and Chauvin changed its name to B. 149, and, finally, to "The White Lady."

Now the stage was set in the interior. The most difficult and most dangerous task still remained: to establish contact with the Allies.

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CHAPTER III

ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE ALLIES

IT was possible to lay down certain principles and follow them out in organizing the service in the interior, but in establishing contact with the exterior, Dewé and his associates were at the mercy of the Allied agents in Holland. For a year they were to endure discouragement in every form; some of their principal members were to be arrested, and it was only the bravery and dogged determination of its leaders which enabled the Service Michelin to remain in existence. Luck or divine protection was with it, for enough mistakes were committed by the Allied secret services in Holland to have delivered the Service Michelin into the hands of the German Secret Police many times over.

The Service Michelin's first contact was with the French Secret Service. Father Des Onays, in addition to his espionage and other clandestine activities, had occupied himself with the distribution of letters from Belgian soldiers at the front. These letters were addressed to intermediaries in Holland, who then sent them into the occupied territory by means of the many barges which plied between Belgium and Holland for the American Relief. Such means of transmission was too slow for secret service reports—it often took a month for the round

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trip between Rotterdam and Antwerp—but for these letters time was an unimportant factor, and the barges offered excellent means of concealment.

One day Father Des Onays received, along with a bundle of letters, a message from Féchy, a French Secret Service agent in Maestricht, Holland, asking him to mount an espionage service, and promising to arrange a courier service to pick up the reports. Here was an opportunity to establish contact with the exterior. Father Des Onays lost no time in communicating Féchy's offer to Dewé and Chauvin.

Anxious as they were to transmit the Liège and Jemelle train-watching reports, which had already started accumulating, Dewé and Chauvin hesitated. Neujean, who was now directing the Michelin Counter-Espionage Service, had informed them a few days previously that three French agents, Marie Birckel, Fauquenot, and Creusen, had just been arrested, betrayed by a Dutchman named Bertram, a German agent, who had managed to enroll himself in the French Secret Service at Maestricht. Dewé and Chauvin wisely refused to commit themselves, and the following reply was sent to Féchy: "Your request has not fallen on deaf ears. Have patience." Their prudence was justified: shortly afterwards, Snyders, the bargee who had brought the message from Féchy, was arrested at the frontier. Although Dewé and Chauvin were not, at the time, aware of it, Féchy played no part in these arrests. The three French agents were not attached to him, and Snyders was betrayed by a refugee whom he had undertaken to bring across the frontier.

Alarmed at these betrayals, the Service Michelin decided to send a delegate to Belgian General Headquarters, in France, to acquaint them with the situation, and to beg them to instruct

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the Belgian Secret Service to place a trustworthy courier at its disposal for the transmission of its report to Holland. Father Des Onays was called upon to produce a suitable emissary; he presented Bihet, a Belgian engineer, who was anxious to cross the frontier to join the Belgian Army.

After a preliminary interview, Dewé and Chauvin decided Bihet was trustworthy, and the details of his mission were communicated to him. It was agreed that at 11:30 A.M. every day except Sundays, a woman wearing a green felt hat would be in the interior of the St. Denis Church, in Liège. On being accosted with the password "Yser," she would reply, "Lion d'Or." The courier from Holland was then to hand her his message, and fix with her the time and place for the next rendezvous. Bihet was to insert an advertisement in the personal column of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* announcing his arrival.

A frontier guide was found, and on a moonless night, with the help of india-rubber socks and gloves, Bihet was safely taken through the high-voltage electric wire into Holland, in the Eindhoven sector. Two weeks later, the anxiously awaited announcement appeared in the July 23rd issue of the Dutch newspaper.

Dewé and Chauvin sat back and waited. Ten days after Bihet had crossed the frontier, the woman in the green hat started keeping the rendezvous at the St. Denis Church. The days went by but no courier arrived. Hope gave way to despair, and the Michelin chiefs were already searching for other means of communication with Holland, when on the last Sunday in August, during Dewé's absence from home, a peasant presented himself at the house with a letter from Holland. The

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peasant refused to wait, but handed Dewé's wife the letter and at the same time left his name and address.

On Dewé's return he was both dumbfounded and alarmed. Implicit instructions had been given Bihet that none of the Michelin names was to be mentioned, not even at Belgian General Headquarters, and yet here was a courier not only in possession of Dewé's name and address, but they were written out in full on the envelope of the letter for any German secret agent to see who accosted and searched him. The letter, too, as can be judged from its contents, was of the most compromising nature:

"Attached you will find instructions and specimens of the kind of reports you are to furnish. To put you at your ease, I have been charged to collaborate with the head of the Belgian Service here, who will be known to you as Monsieur Constant. We have had to wait until now in order to find a reliable man to bring you these instructions, and to explain to you how your reports will reach us in future. To give you confidence in my identity, I have been to see the brother of 'Paatje.' ['Paatje' was the brother of Father de Jaegher, whose name and address in Holland, Father Des Onays had given Bihet verbally before his departure.] The military authorities have instructed me to communicate the following to you:

"1) Hasten the dispatch of your first reports.
"2) Let us know your expenditure each month.
"3) Avoid contact with other Allied secret services, or their agents.
"4) Don't try to find out anything about the courier, or how your reports are transmitted to us. This is to prevent either of you compromising the other.
"5) Send us new passwords in case we have to use another courier, and let us know how he can contact you.
"6) Send us, one at a time, the names of some of your agents, so

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that in case anything happens to you, we shall have some one to contact.

"7) We hope you will eventually be able to establish posts at Brussels, Namur, and Charleroi, and that they will be mounted as independent units.

"8) If you do not recognize my handwriting, you can have it verified by one of my friends. Attached is my signature on a separate piece of paper.

"BIHET."

The instructions and model reports mentioned in the letter were attached.

The letter was in Bihet's handwriting, and was undoubtedly genuine. This, however, was no proof that it had not fallen into the hands of a traitor. Dewé, as one of the Michelin chiefs, could not afford to take a risk. The fact that the courier had left his address behind, in spite of the instructions in the letter, was also suspect. And, above all, why had he neither given the password, nor had he gone to the St. Denis rendez-vous? Dewé and Chauvin, remembering the trap into which Lambrecht had fallen, were at a loss. They eventually decided to prepare for the worst, and it was agreed that should Dewé receive a visit from the German Secret Police, he was to deny all knowledge of a correspondent in Holland.

A week later, again on a Sunday, the same courier presented himself once more at Dewé's house. This time Dewé was at home, but he refused to talk with the courier.

Although nothing further was heard from the courier, the man proved to be honest, for Dewé was not molested. But the whole procedure was typical of the careless and dangerous methods employed by the Allied secret services, during the earlier stages of the War. It is not known why Bihet so fla-

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grantly disregarded his instructions, nor why the courier did not go to the prearranged rendezvous. It may have been that since he was a peasant at the frontier, Sunday was the only day he could absent himself without arousing suspicion, and it will be remembered that this was the only day that the lady in the green hat did not keep the rendezvous.

As time went on, Dewé would no doubt have communicated with the courier, if, in the meantime, communication with Holland had not been established through another channel.

It was to Boseret, a subordinate member of the Service, that the Michelin group owed its first regular contact with the exterior. Boseret's father-in-law, Gustave Snoeck, the President of the Crédit Anversois, one of the largest of the Belgian banks, was in touch with a courier through whom he had been able to send out several financial reports to his foreign banking agents in Holland and England. Snoeck, a man of fifty, with considerable wealth and a large family, had everything to lose by involving himself in espionage, and yet when Boseret approached him, he readily agreed not only to place his courier at the disposal of the Michelin Service, but to act as its "letter-box."

Towards the end of August, 1916, the first Michelin reports were entrusted to the courier. They passed safely into the hands of van Geysel, the Crédit Anversois agent at The Hague, who in turn handed them over to Abbé de Moor ("Marcel"), one of Major Cameron's agents in Holland. In this way, through no choice of theirs, they were diverted from the Belgian Secret Service and became attached to a service connected with British General Headquarters.

The Michelin chiefs now felt they could proceed with the

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organization in the interior. In rapid succession, additional train-watching posts were established at Brussels, Namur, and Charleroi, controlling all the railway lines passing through these junctions. Twice a week, the reports were delivered to Snoeck for dispatch to Holland.

Dewé and Chauvin eagerly waited for a reply from Holland. Father Des Onays had placed at their disposal his knowledge of military espionage gained in the Lambrecht Service, and the instructions sent in by Bihet had also given them valuable suggestions; but they awaited a criticism of their reports, and, besides, they expected—justifiably—some encouragement from the exterior.

They waited in vain. Their elation gave way to bitter disappointment. Were their reports reaching the Allies? They had no idea. Together with their agents, they were daily risking their lives gathering information, which perhaps never reached its destination. Repeatedly, they demanded that an answer be sent through the same channel by which their reports were passing out to the exterior, but neither they nor Snoeck could get any reply. Finally, after three months had elapsed, they decided to send an emissary once again to Belgian General Headquarters. Boseret volunteered for the mission, and on December 2nd, 1916, he was sent through the high-voltage electric wire, guided by the same frontier guide who had taken Bihet across.

The action of the Michelin chiefs could not have been more opportune, for no sooner had Boseret crossed the frontier, than the whole Snoeck courier system blew up.

It was only after the War that the situation became clear. From Snoeck, in Antwerp, the courier carried the reports to Delphine Alenus at Baelen-sur-Néthe, a small village near the

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Dutch frontier. Delphine Alenus, acting as "letter-box," handed them to a frontier courier, who, in turn, passed them to a peasant whose fields adjoined the high-voltage electric wire. The reports, written on fine tissue paper, and rolled into small cigarette-shaped tubes, were taken to the electric wire hidden in one of the farm implements. At an opportune moment, they were tossed over the wire to another peasant working on the Dutch side of the frontier.

Unceasing vigilance on the part of the German sentries and the Secret Police made this operation exceedingly dangerous. On each side of the high-voltage electric wire, at a distance of about fifteen feet, there was a barbed wire fence to keep animals off. The reports, generally encased in a clod of earth, had, therefore, to be thrown at least thirty feet in distance and ten feet in height to clear the three fences. If the Belgian peasant was caught throwing an object, out of reach of the Secret Police, he could plead that he was merely trying to attract the attention of his Dutch neighbor, and although he would probably be expelled from the frontier, he would not be convicted of espionage. But if the object was seen thrown in the opposite direction, the Belgian peasant was lost; nothing could explain away the compromising evidence. At this particular frontier passage, the Belgian peasant refused to accept any messages from Holland; that was why no answers ever came back.

The five agents who manipulated this frontier passage did their work faithfully and well. Had they been reserved solely for the Michelin Service, as they should have been, the life of the passage would have been lengthened considerably. But Delphine Alenus, without the knowledge of the Michelin Service, was acting as "letter-box" for several other espionage organizations in the interior, and when one of them, that of

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Lesire, became compromised and its members were arrested, she was taken as well. There was no betrayal on her part. The Germans, however, had watched before they made her arrest, and by following the Antwerp courier, they caught Snoeck.

Snoeck, knowing that none of the Michelin reports had fallen into the hands of the Secret Police, stuck to his defense that the messages he had handed the courier were financial reports connected with his bank. His clever defense saved his life, and threw the German Secret Police off the track of the Michelin Service. The organization remained intact, but once again it was without means of communication with Holland.

Through Snoeck's banking agent at The Hague, Boseret traced the Michelin reports to Liévin, a representative of Major Cameron, who some time previously had replaced Abbé de Moor. He was stunned by the news of his father-in-law's arrest. Liévin, too, was in despair; he feared that the whole Michelin Service would be involved. But when Boseret learned that the arrests had come through the frontier passage, he quickly assured Liévin that the conflagration would not spread. He knew that Snoeck was the only link with the Michelin Service, and that Snoeck would not talk.

Liévin, having a reserve frontier passage at his disposal, was all for getting into immediate contact with the Service in the interior, and pressed Boseret for an address to which his courier could be sent. Simple as the request seemed, it placed Boseret in a predicament. The frontier passage had been functioning when he left the interior, and so he had been given no special contact address. The only ones he knew were those of some of the principal members of the Service, and, as in the case of Bihet, he had been implicitly instructed not to mention them.

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In spite of Liévin's repeated urging, Boseret refused to give the necessary information.

If the Michelin chiefs had lacked foresight in not furnishing Boseret with a contact address, they were quick to repair the damage. They learned that a Mademoiselle Dossin, whom they knew they could trust, had received a passport from the Germans permitting her to leave the country for permanent residence abroad. To her they entrusted a verbal message for Boseret to the effect that a courier, answering to the name of Delforge, would be at the Cheval Blanc Inn, Antwerp, every Tuesday and Friday at 3 P.M., and that he should be contacted there. She was also given the necessary password and countersign.

Boseret duly received the message, and passed it immediately to Liévin. Prompt action was taken. Within twenty-four hours, Liévin's courier was on his way to the inn. What happened at the Cheval Blanc, or which courier was to blame is not known. Each courier claimed that he kept the rendezvous. Somehow they missed each other. Liévin's courier returned twice again, but in vain.

In the meantime, Major Cameron was clamoring for the Michelin reports; their importance even at this period was apparent to British General Headquarters. Boseret was in torment. Liévin was again demanding an address. Finally, yielding to Liévin's persuasion, he reluctantly handed over the name and address of Father Des Onays, and to him the courier was sent. In this way, February 14th, 1917, contact with the Michelin Service was once again established, but at a price dearly to be paid for.

Boseret, having accomplished his mission, left for France to join the Belgian Army. Passing through England, he had

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several interviews with Major Cameron, who emphasized the great services which the Michelin organization was rendering.

Liévin's first letter definitely assured the Michelin chiefs that all their reports had reached headquarters. This put new life into them, and hoping that now at last permanent connections had been established with Holland, they commenced to extend the Service considerably. Additional train-watching posts were created at Arlon, Dinant, and Tongres, and a number of itinerant agents were enrolled to report the movement of German Divisions in and out of the rest areas in Flanders, Luxemburg, and along the Franco-Belgian border. Letters passed regularly to and from Liévin. The Michelin Service were now in intimate contact with British General Headquarters.

Everything had run smoothly for three months, when once again the Michelin chiefs became disquieted. For close on a year, they had been borrowing money in the interior on which to run the Service; this could not go on indefinitely. Their repeated requests to Liévin that funds should be sent in to them, passed unheeded. He paid even less attention to their demand that they should be recognized as soldiers. To all this was added a warning from Neujean, the head of the Michelin Counter-Espionage Section, that Lechat, who had replaced Father Des Onays as "letter-box," was suspected by the German Secret Police. Dewé and Chauvin immediately decided to send an emissary across the border to warn Liévin that his courier system was compromised, and to settle, either with the British or the Belgian military authorities, the questions of funds as well as the militarization of the Michelin Service.

It was through Madame Scheidt, a patriotic Belgian

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woman who occupied herself aiding young Belgians and Frenchmen of military age to escape across the Dutch border, that a suitable delegate was found. Gustave Lemaire, a Belgian engineer, undertook the mission. Hidden next to the keel, under the floor boards of a barge, Lemaire crossed the frontier on June 5th, 1917.

History repeated itself, for no sooner had Lemaire arrived in Holland than the Germans arrested Father Des Onays, Lechat, Baron Fayen, and Montfort, those of the Michelin Service who had been directly in contact with Liévin's courier.

The story of this betrayal, for a betrayal it was, remained for a long time an intriguing mystery. The courier who had contacted Father Des Onays with Liévin's first letter was a certain Georges Gylinck, to whom Liévin had given the name of St. George. Father Des Onays had immediately put him in touch with Lechat, who from then on had acted as the Michelin "letter-box" in Liège; it was here that the Liège and Jemelle reports had been deposited. Shortly afterwards, St. George was also put in contact with Baron Fayen, the "letter-box" for the Brussels, Mons, Charleroi, and Namur reports. Montfort was the Michelin courier who brought headquarters in Liège duplicates of the reports which Baron Fayen handed St. George in Brussels.

This system had worked without a hitch for four months, when suddenly, on June 13th, 1917, the German Secret Police arrested Lechat, Baron Fayen, and Montfort; this was quickly followed up by the arrest of Father Des Onays a day later. Baron Fayen was caught with the Michelin reports on him, while he was waiting at a rendezvous for St. George. The Secret Police promptly installed themselves in his house; and although they searched it from top to bottom, they missed the

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duplicates of the reports which they had seized on him. The duplicate reports were stuck by a thumb tack underneath the top of the dresser, above the highest drawer.*

Montfort was seized shortly afterwards when he called to pick up these duplicate reports. On him they found, hidden in his sock, some spy reports which he had collected en route from another of the Michelin agents.

Lechat, warned by Neujean, had nothing compromising on him when he was arrested at his house.

Father Des Onays, who combined his spy activities with the duties of professor at the College St. Servais, was arrested while he was taking his Latin class. Caught unawares, he had several documents on his person. To gain time, somehow, he insisted that the Head of the College be called before he was taken off. While one of the Secret Police left the room to fetch the Head, Father Des Onays continued his class, and managed to slip the compromising documents into a Virgil book which he handed to one of his students.

Father Des Onays and Lechat were taken to Brussels, and there the interrogation of the four prisoners commenced. To their utter amazement, the Secret Police produced photographic copies of all the correspondence which had passed between Liévin and the Michelin Service.

After the War, Liévin made the following statement:

"St. George was one of my couriers. He rendered exceptional services in 1916, by penetrating into some of the most difficult regions, such as Lille, Courtrai, and Tournay, to collect reports. Tempted by money, he sold his services to the German Secret Police, in 1917, and through him eight of my agents were shot, and many were arrested. Before the War, he resided in Brussels. He is now a

* They were still there when Baron Fayen returned home after the Armistice.

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fugitive in Holland. I have handed his photograph over to the department of Justice."

This was a confirmation of the following information which the British Counter-Espionage Service in Holland had secured about him just before the Armistice:

"Gylinck, Georges, Belgian subject, works under the direction of Reitinger, German Secret Police Bureau 'C,' Brussels. His service No. is 43, and he often uses the false name of 'Durant.' During 1915 he was employed by a Belgian organization to distribute in the occupied territory letters from Belgian soldiers at the front. He was eventually arrested in Antwerp by Reitinger who, sensing that he possibly had caught a man who would be useful to him, offered to let him off if he would work for the German Secret Police. Gylinck accepted the offer. He first of all was successful in procuring the arrest of several Belgians involved in helping refugees to escape across the Dutch frontier. He was then sent on a mission to Holland, where he managed to get himself enrolled in the service of Liévin. Although several men in his organizations were arrested (Lesire, Goedhuis, and others), Liévin continued to have confidence in him. Gylinck is undoubtedly one of the best of the German counter-espionage agents."

There is no doubt of St. George's (Gylinck's) culpability, but one mystery still remains: how did the Secret Police get hold of the photographic copies of all the correspondence which passed between Liévin and the Michelin Service? If St. George had handed the Germans the letters for photographing, before passing them on, surely they would have held back the Michelin reports, which were doing them incalculable harm. Furthermore, if the arrested members had been under surveillance for four months, many others of the Michelin Service would have been caught.

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The opinion has been expressed that St. George was a "double agent," betraying both Liévin and the Germans in turn. His sole interest was money, which he was getting from both sides. If he had betrayed Father Des Onays as soon as Liévin had given him the first message, he would only have received a small bonus for the arrest of a single agent, and, in addition, he would have given himself away to Liévin. It was to his interest, therefore, to wait until he had contacted more members. In this way he received a bigger reward from the Germans, and, at the same time, drew considerable sums from Liévin for his services as courier. It has further been surmised that the Michelin correspondence did not reach the Secret Police through St. George, but was stolen from Liévin's files by some one else. If this is the case, the theft was without Liévin's knowledge, for his good faith has never been questioned; he had been one of the best of Major Cameron's representatives in Holland during the preceding year.

At the trial both Father Des Onays and Lechat steadfastly denied any knowledge of espionage activities; and the Germans, still hoping to use St. George as a stool-pigeon, never produced him as a witness. Baron Fayen and Montfort refused to give any information as to the source of the reports; besides, as "letter-box" and courier respectively, they had been kept isolated from the Michelin Service.

Father Des Onays and Lechat received comparatively light sentences, and were sent to a prison camp in Germany. The Germans had no direct evidence against them, except the word of a traitor. Baron Fayen and Montfort were both condemned to twelve years hard labor.

Father Des Onays could well afford to smile. He had not only been one of the most valued of the Allied agents in the

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occupied territories, but since the commencement of the War, had participated in every conceivable patriotic activity: the distribution of *La Libre Belgique,* a clandestine newspaper; the delivery of letters from Belgian soldiers at the front; and, finally, he had helped many young men of military age to escape across the frontier. His experience had been invaluable to the Michelin Service.

The Michelin Service had now definitely closed the first phase of its activity. It had functioned for a year, and during practically the whole of this time it had been sending out reports through Major Cameron which had proved indispensable to British General Headquarters; but it had been gravely compromised on many occasions. In fairness to the Allied secret services, with which it had been in contact, the difficulties in Holland, and at the Belgian-Dutch frontier must again be stressed. Apart from the efficient German control at the frontier (high-voltage electric wire, sentries, Secret Police, mounted patrols, searchlights, police dogs, etc.), and the competition amongst the Allied secret services in Holland, caused by the lack of unity in the Allied High Command, there was another important factor. In order not to attract the attention of the Secret Police, those who occupied themselves with the passage of the reports at the frontier had to be recruited from the border residents. These were either peasants, and men of inferior intelligence, or men who before the War had been engaged in smuggling or poaching. It meant that the Allied secret services were often at the mercy of men of the gangster type who were just as amenable to serving the Germans as they were the Allies. This, more than anything else, was responsible for the frequent betrayals.

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CHAPTER IV

THE BRITISH SECRET SERVICE TAKES CHARGE

IT was now June, 1917, and considerable changes had taken place among the Allied secret services in Holland. The French, realizing that competition among the different services was destructive, had curtailed their own activities in Holland; they were now using Switzerland as the main base for their operations. Lefebvre, who remained in charge of the much reduced French Service in Holland, was instructed by his chief, Colonel Wallner, to collaborate or step aside at the request of the other Allied services. The British Admiralty, and British Aviation Services had recalled some of their representatives, others had been placed at the disposal of the British Secret Service proper. The two services attached to British General Headquarters, the one directed by Major Cameron, the other by Major Wallinger, still continued to function, although they were existing to a great extent on the reputation gained during the 1915-1916 period, when they had led the field in obtaining results. Even they were eventually amalgamated into one service, and had the War lasted a few months longer, they, too, would have been placed under the direction of the British Secret Service. Both Major Cameron, and Major Wallinger had their headquarters at Folkestone, England, and directed their organizations through head agents in Holland,

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all of whom were either of French or Belgian nationality. The Belgian Secret Service, handicapped by lack of funds, had dwindled to the vanishing point.

At this period, the British Secret Service—the old pre-War organization, which had been expanded for the purposes of the War—had by far the most successful organization in Holland. It was directed by Commander Tinsley—known in the Service as "T"—a naval reserve officer, who before the War was managing director of the Uranium Steamship Company, with offices on the Boompjes, Rotterdam. At the outbreak of the War, "C," the Chief of the British Secret Service, in England, had wisely chosen him as his representative in Holland. "T" had lived in Holland for years, he was persona grata with the Dutch authorities, and the offices of the Uranium Steamship Company were excellent cover for secret service activities in a neutral country. Under "T," were four divisions: Military, Naval, Counter-Espionage, and, finally, a press organization which made a digest of all information that could be gleaned from newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals published in the enemy countries. Each division was autonomous, and under its own chief. "T," in addition to his executive duties, kept the Dutch pacified, attended to the transmission of all written reports to headquarters in England, and supplied the funds needed by these four divisions located in his offices.

I was in charge of the Military Section, and directed all its military spy activities in Germany, and behind the German lines in occupied Belgium and France. The military activities of the British Secret Service were really controlled by the British War Office, for they supplied the funds, and the directing officers; hence this military branch of the British Secret Service was often referred to as the War Office Service, ir

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contrast to those directed by British General Headquarters.

On my arrival in Holland, in 1916, I quickly realized that the main problem to be solved was getting the spy reports across the border, and that the formidable barrier which the Germans had built up could only be pierced by having a well-disciplined band of agents distributed along the Belgian-Dutch frontier, each responsible for the organization of a frontier passage in his sector. I also realized that it was even more important to watch and control those who were actually charged with the passage of the reports.

I had been fortunate in securing the services of Moreau, the son of a former high official of the Belgian State Railways, and he it was to whom I entrusted the task of enrolling my frontier agents. There were a large number of Belgian railwaymen, refugees, in Holland, and from among them Moreau recruited the necessary personnel. These men still looked upon Moreau's father as their Chief, and so it came natural to them to obey his son. Their greatest value lay in the fact that they constituted a class whose loyalty could be relied upon, and yet they would pass unnoticed among the peasants, smugglers, and other frontier types who frequented the border villages.

To each agent a number was given, and Moreau assumed the name of "Oram." It was agreed that Oram would be their immediate chief, that they were to obey him implicitly, that once located they were not to move from their prescribed areas, and that Oram would arrange couriers to pick up the reports. Each one swore not to divulge for whom he was working to any one—not even to members of the other Allied secret services—nor was he to try to discover the identity of any of Oram's other agents.

Thus a frontier organization was built up in Holland which

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gradually increased in efficiency. Eventually, during the last two years of the War, we had open continuously at least six frontier passages which were the means of communication with the interior of Belgium. When one broke down we had the other five in reserve, and others were continually being established. The discipline, faithfulness, and superior intelligence of Oram's frontier agents, as compared with those employed by the other Allied secret services, was the keynote of the War Office Service's success at the frontier.

This, then, was the situation, when Lemaire, the Michelin delegate, arrived in Holland on June 5th, 1917. He immediately set out in search of Liévin, but was unable to locate him. He addressed himself to the British Consul General in Rotterdam. Liévin's name was unknown at the Consulate, but as Lemaire insisted that Liévin was attached to a British service, he was sent along to me to make inquiries.

As soon as Lemaire mentioned the name of the Michelin Service, I was all attention. A week previously, through one of our Maestricht agents, I had received a number of train-watching reports from posts at Liège and Jemelle. The nature of the reports showed that they emanated from a well organized service in Belgium, but all that I had to guide me was the signature "M.M.," and the information that they had been deposited at a "letter-box" in Liège, which was serving for one of our organizations in the interior. I had surmised that they came from a service whose communications had broken down. Organizations in the occupied territories often did not realize that there were several Allied secret services in Holland.

A few minutes' conversation with Lemaire soon convinced me that I was right in my estimation of the Michelin Service. I knew who Liévin was, and could have sent Lemaire along

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to him, but I also knew how Liévin was struggling to keep communication open with the interior. On the other hand, the British Secret Service had half a dozen frontier passages which they could place at the disposal of the Michelin Service. To me, my duty was clear. Without hesitating, I offered to attach the Michelin Service to our organization.

My enthusiasm had a marked effect on Lemaire. Already, I was visualizing the super-service of my dreams, and I was getting ready to dismiss him with instructions to meet me again in the afternoon, when he suddenly shot at me, "There are two conditions, however; suitable arrangements must be made to cover their financial expenditure; they also insist on being enrolled as soldiers."

I looked at him in blank amazement, even though I could understand the desire he expressed. Every agent in the interior was serving his country, incurring even greater risks than the soldiers in the front line; each was facing danger alone, without the beat of drums, without any means of self-defense, without uniforms, without the pageantry and excitement of war. And there were no leaves and no rest periods. Agents were continually in danger of being suspected, surprised, denounced, betrayed, put in prison, beaten, and put to death. But, for the moment, the demand seemed quite impossible. How could the War Office make British soldiers out of Belgian subjects? How, even, could the Belgian authorities do it, when it would be far too dangerous to send the names out across the frontier? Above all, how could either of them make women soldiers?—for there were many women enrolled in the Michelin Service.

I was on the point of voicing my sentiments openly, when I noticed the look of expectation and determination on

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Lemaire's face. I parried by asking him how he thought it could be done, and how he thought the oath of allegiance could be administered.

"I don't know," he replied. "You will have to solve the problem. My instructions are to take the matter up with the Belgian authorities in Havre, if I cannot get satisfaction from the British." I knew that even if Belgian General Headquarters were to accede to the request, the Belgian Secret Service could not supply them with a safe means of communication at the frontier. I doubt whether the Belgian Service was getting any information at all out of Belgium at that time.

There seemed only one solution, and that was to grant them their request, and hope that after the War, the British authorities would militarize them. I told Lemaire that I would communicate with the Chief in England, and that within a day or two, I would give him a reply.

It was useless for me to refer the matter to higher authorities; I knew that even if the War Office was willing to grant their request, it would be necessary to get the consent of the Belgian Government, and that many useful months would be lost. The next day, at peace with my conscience, I told Lemaire that the request had been granted, that he could write a letter to this effect, and that I would see that the letter was delivered to any address he indicated in Brussels or Liège.

Lemaire, an engineer and executive in one of Belgium's biggest engineering works, was an intelligent man. There were many questions he could have asked me; he could have embarrassed me by demanding guarantees or an official letter from the War Office. I think he realized the audacity of their demands, however, and having obtained a favorable reply from me, he was glad to let the matter drop.

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The financial question was quickly settled. I promised Lemaire that we would send weekly in to the Michelin Service such sums as they required to cover their current expenditure, and that the money which had been advanced so far by Marcel Nagelmackers, and by Phillipart, another patriotic Belgian banker who had been assisting them financially, would be reimbursed after the War. These promises were kept. After the Armistice, the equivalent of $150,000 in Belgian francs was paid over to these two bankers. Not only did they render an inestimable service in advancing this money (they took no interest) but in doing it, they involved themselves in espionage. They would have been shot if they had been caught.

Lemaire expressed himself fully satisfied. He wrote the letter I requested recommending that they should put themselves unreservedly under our direction, informing them that their militarization had been accorded, and giving them details of the financial arrangement. Finally, he gave me the address of a "letter-box" at Neerpelt, through which we could contact the Michelin Service.

His letter, together with one from me confirming Lemaire's statements and explaining that we were already receiving their reports marked "M.M.," was immediately dispatched to the interior by way of a reserve frontier passage north of Liège. I waited anxiously, for I was not at all sure what the Michelin attitude would be.

Keyed up with tense interest I set out three days later, on July 16th, to keep a rendezvous with Oram, who was expected back from Maestricht that night with an answer. As soon as I saw his face, I knew something had happened. "The 'letter-box' has been arrested," were the words with which he greeted me.

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"And the courier?" I asked in alarm.

"He is at the frontier waiting for instructions," I was relieved to hear.

I immediately got in touch with Lemaire, who was stopping at the Hotel des Indes, in The Hague, and urged him to hurry to Rotterdam at once. It was nearly midnight when he reached me. Both of us were at a loss to understand the situation—neither knew at that time about St. George, and the arrests of Father Des Onays and the others. My insistent demands for another address put Lemaire in the same dilemma that Boseret had been in: the only name he could give me was that of Chauvin, and he was naturally reluctant that it should be used. Had I then known the extraordinary rôle that the Michelin Service was destined to play, I certainly would have exhausted every other means before sending a frontier courier to one of its chiefs. But it had been a strict principle with me to keep the services in the interior completely isolated from each other, and, above all, I was anxious to open up communications to find out what had happened. I knew our courier was trustworthy and I used that and every other argument to induce Lemaire to give me permission to contact Chauvin. It was a very worried Lemaire who finally gave his consent. That same night I gave Oram the new address; early the next morning he was on his way to the frontier to give his frontier agent the necessary instructions.

We were to receive still another alarm. Our courier in the interior, who bore the No. 101, stopped for the night by chance at a small hotel in Liège, the Hotel van Gaever, Place St. Lambert. Neujean, the head of the Michelin Counter-Espionage Section, happened that very day to warn the Michelin chiefs that there were two stool-pigeons stopping at

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this hotel who, under the pretense that they were escaped prisoners-of-war, were trying to get into touch with refugee organizations. The courier's presence at the hotel might have been passed over had not Neujean followed up his first warning by a second, to the effect that our courier had been seen talking to these two men. Dewé and Chauvin, overwrought by the many arrests, immediately jumped to conclusions, and the result can well be imagined.

Again I was on my toes waiting for a favorable answer, when through the same Maestricht agent who had brought me the "M.M." reports, I received a message that courier 101 was suspect, that Chauvin had gone into hiding, and that communication for the time being should be exclusively through the present "M.M." channel. My consternation can well be pictured. I was at a loss what to tell Lemaire.

I was still wondering what to do, when, on the next day, a second message was relayed to me via the same route, withdrawing the accusation against our courier, acquainting us with the St. George affair, giving us the name and address of a "letter-box" in Liège, and requesting that our courier 101 should be sent to this new "letter-box."

It was only after the War that I was able to piece together all these alarming events which happened in such quick succession during the tragic days between July 13th and July 22nd. After the War, too, I learned that the arrest of the "letter-box" at Neerpelt had nothing to do with St. George: the man had been caught assisting refugees to escape across the frontier.

Out of all the confusion, order was restored; and from then on, the Michelin chiefs were able to concentrate on extending their Service in the interior. They never again had to worry about getting their reports across the border: the War Office

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Service saw to it that the Michelin reports were brought into Holland at least twice a week.

Lemaire remained in Holland long enough to satisfy himself that the liaison between the Michelin Service and the War Office Service was working smoothly. His secret service mission having been successfully accomplished, he left for Havre to place his engineering experience at the disposal of the Belgian Government. He kept the promise I exacted from him; no word of the Michelin Service crossed his lips until after the War.

One more member of the Michelin Service was to be a victim of St. George. Delhaize, whose name had been given to Liévin as a reserve "letter-box" to replace Lechat in case of necessity, was arrested September, 1917. Liévin, undoubtedly, had passed Delhaize's name on to St. George. The German Secret Police watched him for four months, hoping through him to get on the track of the Michelin Service. But Dewé and Chauvin were on their guard, and were not to be caught. When the Secret Police saw that their surveillance was futile, they eventually arrested Delhaize. Third degree methods failed to tear from him the little information he could have given, and, finally, he was deported to Germany.

Liévin did not give up the Michelin Service without a struggle. He had been warned several days ahead to watch for Lemaire's arrival. When he learned through the Belgian Consulate that Lemaire was actually in Holland, and in touch with me, he sent into the interior, by way of Delhaize, a spirited letter of protest in which he fiercely attacked the War Office Service. He was also pulling strings through Major Cameron in Folkestone with a view to forcing us to relinquish the Michelin Service, when the details of St. George's treachery

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suddenly came to light. There was no need for further arguments.

After the War, I happened to see some of Liévin's notes. Opposite the Michelin Service was written, "Stolen from me by the War Office Service."

I couldn't help but be amused. The Michelin Chiefs were masters of their own destiny—they chose to remain with the Service which could serve them best.

The note of personal possession which Liévin sounded, typified one of the baneful effects of the competition among the Allied secret services in Holland. Each in its endeavor to get ahead of the other often, unintentionally, lost sight of the main objective—the defeat of the Germans. The Michelin Service was created by its Chiefs in the interior; the credit belongs to them and not to any of the Allied secret services. It has been shown that at different stages it had been in contact with the French and Belgian services, and with the British General Headquarters' Service directed by Major Cameron through Liévin. It was fortunate for it that it eventually became attached to us, for, at this period, the War Office Service alone could absolutely guarantee the transmission of the Michelin reports across the Belgian-Dutch border.

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CHAPTER V

THE MILITARIZATION OF THE WHITE LADY

THE Michelin Service now entered upon a new phase of its activity. One of its first steps was to change its name. From the reports which had been seized on Fayen and Montfort, at the time of the St. George arrests, and from the photographic copies of the correspondence which had passed between Liévin and the Michelin Service, the German Secret Service was fully aware of the name. It was important that they should be led into believing that they had broken up the Service completely. There was always the possibility that another report might fall into their hands, and the link between it and the chain of evidence which they had built up around the St. George arrests had to be destroyed. The Michelin Service, therefore, disappeared in name, and became first of all B. 149, and then "The White Lady"—the legendary phantom whose appearance to a ruling Hohenzollern would herald the downfall of the dynasty.

Permission to militarize the Service gave new life to Dewé and Chauvin: abandoned projects were resuscitated, and the militarization was immediately put into effect. When the Service was first founded, they had tried to organize the different sections, or sectors, as separate and independent nests, with centers at Liège, Brussels, Namur, and Charleroi; they

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had even intended to create individual "letter-boxes" for each section, to enable their reports to be picked up by independent couriers from Holland, and passed through four distinct passages at the frontier. They soon realized, however, that a single frontier passage was all Liévin could manage; in addition, lack of experience kept the heads of sections continually in consultation with Headquarters in Liège. The result was that though certain individual agents, more exposed than others, were isolated, yet as a whole the Service had remained closely knitted together. The militarization and increased experience gained by the heads of sections during the past year, at last gave Dewé and Chauvin an opportunity to attain, in a slightly modified form, what they had been striving for from the beginning.

Three battalions were created with centers at Liège, Namur, and Charleroi. Each battalion was divided into companies, each company into platoons. Thus the Namur sector became Battalion II, with companies at Marche, Namur, and Chimay; and the Marche company had its platoons at Marche, Arlon, and Luxemburg; the Namur and Chimay companies were similarly divided up into platoons. Each unit covered the area designated by its name.

Each fourth platoon in a company occupied itself exclusively with collecting the reports from the three other platoons, and depositing them at a "letter-box" allocated to the company. Each battalion also had a special unit, some of whose members collected the reports at the company "letter-boxes" and deposited them at the battalion "letter-box," while a special member carried the reports from this "letter-box" to the Headquarters' "letter-box" in Liège. In Liège there were three "letter-boxes," one for each battalion. These "letter-boxes," and

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the couriers serving them, were kept as completely isolated as possible. They knew nothing about the Service except their own particular duties; it was forbidden them to try and discover the identity of any member of the Service.

Each battalion had a secretariat where the reports picked up at the battalion "letter-box" were typed out, after they had been scrutinized by the battalion commander. At Liège, the reports from the three battalions were examined and criticized by Dewé and Chauvin, and were then passed on to the Headquarters' secretariat, where they were prepared for transmission to Holland.

A special courier carried the reports from the Headquarters' secretariat to the frontier "letter-box." Here the duties of the War Office Service commenced. It was up to it to pick up the reports at this "letter-box" and convey them across the frontier into Holland. The rôle of frontier "letter-box" was the most dangerous in the organization, and so not only the agent occupying it, but every one coming into contact with him, was especially isolated. The typing of the reports served a twofold purpose: it diminished the bulk, and it removed the evidence which handwriting would have supplied, if the reports were seized.

General Headquarters consisted of the two Chiefs; a Supreme Council of eight members; a chaplain; a counter-espionage section; a section to deal with finances; a courier section; the secretariat already mentioned; a section to attend to the hiding of compromised agents, and to make arrangements for their escape across the frontier into Holland; and, finally, a section to study all new extensions, and, if approved by the Supreme Council, to carry them into effect.

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All members were required to take one of the following oaths of allegiance:

(1) "I declare that I have engaged myself as a soldier in the Military Observation Corps of the Allies until the end of the War.

"I swear before God to respect this engagement; to accomplish conscientiously the duties which are entrusted to me; to obey my superior officers; not to reveal to any one whomsoever, without formal permission, anything concerning the Service, not even if this should entail for me or mine the penalty of death; not to join any other espionage service, nor to undertake any work extraneous to the Service, which might either cause an inquiry or my arrest by the Germans."

(2) The same oath of allegiance as above, but instead of the phrase "to accomplish conscientiously the duties which are entrusted to me," it was allowed to substitute the following: "to accomplish conscientiously the duties which I have undertaken, or shall undertake in the future."

To each was given a lead identity disc, with his name, date and place of birth, and matriculation number engraved on it. This disc was to be buried immediately, and was not to be disinterred until after the War.

In addition to the reorganization already mentioned, the militarization, and the oath of allegiance had other far-reaching effects. Hitherto, being civilians, Dewé and Chauvin had been forced to discuss all projects with agents before they would carry them out. This not only involved loss of time, but it forced them to disclose details of organization, which should have been kept secret. Now a subordinate agent could be ordered to do what was required.

The oath of allegiance also put a stop, once and for all, to agents involving themselves in such subsidiary duties as the

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distribution of letters from Belgian soldiers at the front; the circulation of *La Libre Belgique,* and other clandestine publications; and the assisting of Belgians of military age to escape across the frontier. These extraneous activities not only often led to the arrest of agents, but invariably compromised the whole espionage organization to which they belonged.

The militarization also eased the minds of the many Belgians of military age enrolled in "The White Lady." These men, recruited from the most patriotic elements of the population, wanted to be sure that neither the Belgian authorities nor the public would criticize them after the War for not having crossed the frontier to join the Belgian Army. Finally, the fear of a post-War Military Court Martial acted as an additional deterrent to those who were arrested. Betrayal was the principal source of information of the German Secret Police—German third-degree methods, and the use of stool-pigeons in the prisons taxed the loyalty of the prisoners to the limit of their endurance.

Not satisfied with the increased security which the militarization had brought them, Dewé and Chauvin employed all their ingenuity and organizing ability to consolidate the Service, and to protect it still further against the German Secret Police.

All members of "The White Lady" were instructed to use false names both in their reports, and in contacting other members of the Service. Dewé became in turn van den Bosch, Gauthier, and Muraille; Chauvin assumed successively the names of Beaumont, Valdor, Granito, Bouchon and Dumont; while Neujean was known as Petit. It will be seen later how these false names saved both Dewé and Neujean from certain arrest.

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OSCAR DOUBLET

One of the couriers of the Hirson Platoon.
(See Chapter VI)

JULIETTE DELRUALLE

(See Chapter IX)

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One of the Hide-outs Where Compromised Agents Were Hidden

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To prevent discovery and arrest, the greatest ingenuity was employed in choosing and fitting out each of the two headquarters. The main one was a perfect rabbit warren. It had five exits—one into the front street; one into a back garden, from which access could be gained to a side street, by way of an alley; one to the roof through a skylight; and finally two, one on each floor, leading through very ordinary looking wall closets into the adjoining house, where an apparently harmless old couple lived, who, as far as their neighbors were concerned, never held any communication with the inmates of the house next door. At the reserve headquarters, in addition to several exits, there was a blind room without windows, which was specially useful on occasions when the Council met late at night—the curfew laws, in operation in the occupied territories, required all lights to be extinguished by a certain hour. "The White Lady" also had three houses in Liège which were used as hiding places for compromised agents.

The arrest of Father Des Onays, and the danger to which both of them had been exposed in their contact with frontier couriers, had taught Dewé and Chauvin a lesson. They now systematically removed all connecting links between themselves and their frontier posts. Frontier "letter-boxes" and couriers who knew their identity were retired, and new ones were recruited through suitable intermediaries. In doing this, they knew that they would still be exposed to many dangers, some unforeseen, others which they would have to face in the everyday execution of their duties; but, as chiefs of "The White Lady," they realized that it was their duty not to incur unnecessary risks. On the other hand, they never shrank from undertaking a mission, however dangerous it might be, if they

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considered that they themselves were the best fitted to carry it out.

As a final precaution, the names and addresses of the three battalion "letter-boxes" were sent through to me in Holland in code permitting me to make direct contact with the battalions in the event that "The White Lady" Headquarters should be seized.

Notwithstanding all these precautionary measures, and in spite of the guiding genius of Dewé and Chauvin, "The White Lady" found itself engaged in a life and death struggle with the German Secret Police during the next eighteen months.

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CHAPTER VI

THE HIRSON PLATOON

THE experiences and adventures of the Hirson Platoon were representative of the thirty-eight platoons of "The White Lady." True, each kept watch over different areas, but their problems, their duties, their spy-technique, and, finally, the dangers they encountered were the same. I have chosen to tell about this particular platoon, not because it provided more thrilling adventures than the others, but merely because, being one of the last units to be formed, its story can be told within the space of a single chapter. I refer those who would like more specific details as to the sort of information these valiant agents collected at the risk of their lives, to the appendix. There I have inserted a number of the questionnaires and "spy instructions" which were sent from Holland to our agents in the occupied territories. These questionnaires do not cover all the material obtained—much of that was left to the spy's own appreciation of the situation—but they do illustrate the systematic routine information required by Allied General Headquarters. I have already pointed out that many documents were faked, and many of them were planted on the Allies, but the evidence collected by the vigilant band of "White Lady" agents, who eventually covered the whole area behind

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the German Western Front from Verdun to the Sea, was conclusive.

It was towards the end of August, 1917, after we had been in touch with "The White Lady" about a month, that we received word of a young French refugee who was in hiding at the house of one of their agents in Liège. On the plea that they had given him important verbal information to communicate to us about their organization, they requested that we make arrangements for his passage into Holland.

We were not very enthusiastic. We had already placed several frontier passages at the disposal of "The White Lady." We had provided them with a dictionary code which they could safely use. And we were anxious to abolish their system of sending delegates across the border into Holland. They were exposed to the danger of being caught, and the even greater danger—strange as it may seem—that they would divulge details of our organization to the other Allied secret services, whose prying curiosity was as likely to attract the attention of the German Secret Police as any slip on the part of our agents. "The White Lady" insisted, however; and so we sent in Charles Willekens, our most trusted frontier guide, to fetch him.

I was attracted to Edmond Amiable as soon as I saw him—a young man of about twenty, of medium height, trimly athletic, his frank eyes blazing with enthusiasm. In a few words, he gave me his story. He had intended entering the priesthood, and had already completed part of his novitiate when he felt the urge to escape from occupied territory in order to join the Army and serve his country. He told of the

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difficulties he had encountered in making his way to Liège from Hirson, across the Franco-Belgian border. In Liège, through a Jesuit priest, he had come into contact with "The White Lady." I found in reality that he knew practically nothing about the existing organization of "The White Lady," but that the two chiefs, under the assumed names of Gauthier and Dumont, had discussed very thoroughly with him some of the problems which the militarization involved, and on which they wanted my advice.

As I sat and listened to this young patriot, who had come from the very area the Allied secret services had in vain been trying to penetrate during the last two years, I conceived the idea of persuading him to return. It was the height of my ambition to establish a train-watching post on the Hirson-Mézières line, that important artery which ran parallel to the German battle front, which increased in importance as the rumors of a big German offensive grew thicker. In occupied France, too, we would be tapping not only rest areas but also regions used by the Germans for the massing of troops.

With the control of the Hirson-Mézières line giving us the transference of divisions from one sector of the Front to another, and with itinerant agents reporting troop concentrations in the different areas, we would be able to locate sectors chosen for attack, and would thus be in a position to supply information of vital importance to the Allies. Before our contact with "The White Lady," we had urged our other organizations in the interior to penetrate into France, but the strict surveillance there, especially along the Franco-Belgian border, had checkmated all their efforts.

The finding of stationary agents was not difficult; the problem was the transmission of the reports. In Belgium, the

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ordinary activities of business and of life continued even in the presence of the Germans; in occupied France, trade and industry had been completely crippled, a great part of the civilian population had been deported, and those who remained had to obtain special permits to travel even two or three miles.

When I broached the subject to Amiable, he immediately consented. He insisted, however, that I get permission from the French authorities, so that on his return he could satisfy his father, a veteran of the Franco-German War, who had encouraged him to escape. General Bucabeille, the French military attaché at The Hague, readily complied with our wishes. He interviewed his young compatriot and returned him to us with an official blessing for the success of the undertaking.

As much as I should have preferred getting Amiable to mount an independent service, with separate couriers right through to me in Holland, I knew this was impossible. In order to block off the area immediately behind their front line, the Germans had posted a cordon of sentries along the Franco-Belgian border, and were maintaining almost as strict surveillance there as they were along the Belgian-Dutch frontier. To penetrate this barrier, I knew it would require an organization on the spot. I decided, therefore, to return Amiable unreservedly to "The White Lady," and leave it to them to mount this new service in conjunction with their own.

Calling him No. A. 91, we placed him once again in the hands of our frontier guide, the trusted and undaunted Charles Willekens, and returned him to the address in Liège where we had picked him up.

Dewé and Chauvin threw themselves enthusiastically into the creation of this new service. For some time they had envisaged the formation of a company in the Chimay area,

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and Hirson would fit admirably into it as one of its four platoons.

Since not only the mounting of the Hirson Platoon, but that of a whole company was involved, Chauvin decided to accompany A. 91 on his mission.

On August 29th, 1917, Chauvin and A. 91 arrived at Battalion Headquarters in Namur. There Abbé Philippot, the Commander of the Second Battalion, to which the Chimay Company was to be attached after formation, gave them a letter of introduction to Ghislain Hanotier, a friend of his, whom he knew he could trust.

Two days later, A. 91 and Chauvin, who had carefully hidden his identity under the name of Dumont, arrived in Chimay. While A. 91 left for Macon, a village some two miles from the Franco-Belgian border, Dumont went off to find Hanotier. This man, who had already served for two years in an old espionage service (the Service Biscops, which eventually had lost contact with Holland), received Dumont with open arms. With his aid, Dumont in addition to a "letter-box" for Chimay, soon recruited two couriers—one between Chimay and the French frontier, the other between Chimay and the Battalion "letter-box" in Namur.

In the meantime, A. 91, after several fruitless endeavors to find a guide to take Dumont and himself across the frontier, eventually addressed himself to Anatole Gobeaux, a man whom he had known since boyhood. Gobeaux, who between teaching in the Macon village school found time to run a sabot syndicate, belonged to one of those old families of Sambre-and-Meuse, whose patriotism and sense of honor are traditional. Brave, and determined, he had been a leader in every patriotic activity in the village from the first days of the occupation.

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It is not surprising, then, that when A. 91 told him that he was looking for some one to aid him in his mission, he replied: "This some one is going to be me, Edmond. I am not going to allow any one to deprive me of the honor of serving my country."

I leave it to Gobeaux to tell of A. 91's, and Dumont's adventures at the frontier:

"I could not help but be impressed by Dumont, who had now joined A. 91. His generosity and greatness of soul won my heart immediately. I was astounded at the calm manner with which, in a few words and without bravado, he outlined their plans.

"Their objective was to reach Trélon, seven kilometers distant, where A. 91's father lived. The distance was not great, but there was no necessity to stress the dangers they would have to encounter. A. 91 knew them only too well. The area was thickly wooded, and in it was hidden innumerable German sentries, and Secret Police, aided by well-trained police dogs. If one were challenged, one had to halt, present one's permit to cross the frontier—granted only on exceptional occasions—and, finally, allow oneself to be rigorously searched. An attempt at escape meant almost certain death in the form of a sentry's bullet.

"The Germans had good reason to guard this area. At Trélon was the Château de Merode, where the Kaiser often took up his quarters, and which was also the Headquarters of one of the German armies. In addition, only fifteen kilometers away, was Hirson, the center pivot of the whole railway network immediately behind the German front; and there too was their General Railway Headquarters.

"A way of crossing the frontier immediately suggested itself to me: 'X,' the director of a small glass factory, just across the frontier, had a group permit which allowed him to take across the frontier daily twenty-five workmen, who lived in Belgium. All that was necessary was for my two friends to disguise themselves as workmen and join the group. But 'X's' patriotism, which he continually

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vaunted, was only a façade—he made us lose three valuable days by first of all consenting, and then showing the white feather.

"One sole means now remained to me, and that was to entrust them to a friend of mine, Moreau, who lived at Baives, just across the frontier, and who slipped over occasionally to purchase necessities for his family. As luck would have it, Moreau put in an appearance the next day, and, as I had foreseen, he not only gladly agreed to act as their guide, but allowed himself to be enrolled in "The White Lady" as their trans-frontier courier between Baives and Macon.

"Dumont and A.91 had a double risk to face. An ordinary inhabitant would have received a month's imprisonment for a first offense, if arrested trying to cross the frontier and he was not involved in any clandestine activity. But A.91 had already been reported to the Secret Police as having fled the country; and it would have been impossible for Dumont, a Belgian from Liège, to explain his presence in the area. Knowing that they could not face an interrogation, they started on their hazardous journey across the French frontier on the night of September 7th.

"Eight o'clock was sounding at the village church, when the three of them, dressed as workmen, got under way: A.91 in a dirty pair of blue-jeans and a cap; Dumont in an old rain coat and a shabby felt hat. Guided by Moreau, who knew every path through the woods, they quickly gained the frontier. They advanced stealthily, a few yards at a time. With ears alert, straining at every sound, they expected each moment to be challenged by some hidden sentry; but so expertly did Moreau guide them that they saw no one. They pressed forward rapidly, anxious to get away from the frontier as fast as they could. The danger was by no means over, but they felt greatly relieved. On the outskirts of Trélon, Moreau left them to continue on their own. A.91 was now near his home, and could be relied on to find the way.

"Suddenly, as they came out of a clearing, the two men found themselves faced by several German soldiers. They were so close that it was useless trying to run—they would have been mowed down. The only thing to do was to advance resolutely; they were away from the frontier, and most likely would be taken for or-

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dinary inhabitants of the village. Their audacity and the casual air they assumed, worked; they were already about thirty yards past them, and had boldly entered a road leading to the village, when one of the soldiers, apparently as an after-thought, shouted, 'Halt!'

"Dumont and A.91, pretending not to hear, hastened their steps. Again shouts of 'Halt!' 'Halt!' this time followed by the whiz of a bullet. As if by common accord, they threw themselves at the hedge bordering the road—A.91 to the left, Dumont to the right. Dumont, emerging on the other side of the hedge, was seen by one of the soldiers, who had followed his maneuver. As the soldier made a dash for him, Dumont took to his heels. He was rapidly losing breath, when he fell headlong into a ditch which he had failed to see in the dark. Completely exhausted, he lay where he was. The soldier passed by without seeing him.

"In the distance, Dumont heard a struggle going on, terminating in a cry of triumph. Then silence. 'A.91 has been caught,' passed through his mind. For an hour Dumont did not stir. Then a heavy rain started falling, and he resolved to make a move. His first thoughts were to reach the house of A.91's father, but so convinced was he that A.91 had been arrested that he dismissed the idea immediately—it would be the very spot where the Secret Police would be waiting for him. There seemed no alternative but to try and get back to Belgium.

"Wandering through the night, aided by the obscurity and the rain, Dumont eventually reached Macon. It was in a pitiful condition, his face and hands torn by the underbrush, wet to the skin, covered with mud, and completely exhausted, that I found him at my front door at dawn. After a change of clothes, and a few hours sleep, I drove him in a cart to Chimay, where together with Hanotier, we went over the night's adventures, and lamented the fate of A.91.

"What had happened to A.91 during this time? When he passed through the fence, instead of running away from it as Dumont had done, he ran along it for about fifty yards, and there finding an opening, he pushed his way into the center of the hedge. Here, afraid to move, he remained for at least three hours. At one time,

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he heard a group of soldiers, not ten yards away from him, discussing what had happened to the two of them. It was not until the rain came that he found it safe to move. Eventually, groping his way across the fields, he reached his father's home at midnight.

"Quickly, he explained to the surprised old man, the crowded events of the evening. Anxiously, they waited for Dumont to arrive; and then as morning came, they gave up hope. Dumont had surely been arrested, was their only conclusion.

"During the course of the day, A.91 explained his mission to his father, himself a rugged veteran of former wars. The father nobly undertook to organize the Hirson Platoon. Much as his family would have liked him to remain at least for a few days, they counseled A.91 to return to Belgium immediately—every one in the village knew that he had left to join the French Army, via Holland, several months previously; it would have been suicidal to remain. On the next night, therefore, once again guided by Moreau, he regained my home in Macon without any further adventures. Great was his surprise and joy, when he heard of Dumont's safe return. It was a still more surprised Dumont, who greeted him, when A.91 reached Chimay."

It was to the neighboring village of Fourmies that Amiable Senior, who had assumed the name of "Pierre," first went. Here lived Felix Latouche ("Dominique"), a former railway employee of the Campagnie du Nord, with whom A.91, when still a boy, had made friends. Apart from his ardent patriotism, Dominique had a private score to settle with the Germans: during the earlier stages of the occupation, they had forced him to remain for several months at his post on the railway, threatening deportation of his family and himself if he refused. He joyfully entered the services of "The White Lady," when solicited by Pierre.

Dominique's cottage, right on the railway line, was admirably situated for watching the troop trains as they passed by,

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night and day; and here, the dream of the Allied secret services was at last realized. Aided by his wife, and his two little sisters, aged 14 and 13 years, Dominique mounted a train-watching post on the Hirson-Mézières line.

Every one in this humble household did their share of watching. By day it was the two small girls, who, through a narrow slit in the heavily curtained windows, scrutinized the trains as they went by; at night it was Dominique and his wife. The composition of the trains was jotted down in terms of comestibles: beans for soldiers, chicory for horses, coffee for cannons, and so on. The reports, in readiness for the courier, were hidden in the hollow handle of a kitchen broom, which was left innocently in its place in the corner. On September 23rd, the Fourmies post, No. 201 in the Service, started working, and from then on until the Armistice, not a single troop train was missed on this the most important railway artery behind the German front.

Pierre continued the difficult task of recruiting agents. The danger he ran can only be estimated by one who has been in the service. Even after narrowing down his list to the chosen few whom he considered capable and trustworthy, there always remained the risk of refusal, and the fear, not so much of betrayal, but of gossip reaching the ears of one of the many German stool-pigeons to be found in every village.

At Glageon, mid-way between Trélon and Fourmies, Pierre recruited his next agent, Crésillon, an employee at a sawmill forcibly kept in operation by the Germans. Adjoining the saw-mill was a German engineer park, where ladders to place over barbed wire entanglements, trench floor boards, mines to be used against tanks, and all kinds of trench material were manufactured. At this park there was a continual coming and

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going of detachments, sent by their divisions to fetch supplies; and here it was that Crésillon kept watch. To his competent eye, the noting of regimental numbers, and the gleaning of military information became a routine performance; he was one of the principal members of the Hirson Platoon, who, later on in February, 1918, sent us that sure indication that it was from the sector opposite this area that the Germans were to launch their great March offensive.

In addition to this valuable work, Crésillon also undertook the duties of "letter-box" and courier. The reports from Fourmies, Avesnes, and other areas were deposited at his house, and from here, regularly twice a week, he carried them half way to Trélon to hand them over to Pierre. From Pierre, as we have already seen, Moreau carried them over the frontier to Gobeaux in Macon. Fearing that his constant meetings with Pierre, which generally took place during the luncheon hour, would attract attention, he eventually handed over his courier duties to his wife. In her profession as midwife, she had an excuse to travel. The Germans never suspected, as she hurried out on her frequent calls, that the delivery of deadly spy reports, cunningly wrapped around the whale bones of her corset, was her special vocation.

In the face of danger, illness, rain, and snow, the Service went on night and day without a break. It was the couriers who had the most dangerous and the most arduous work. None showed a finer devotion to the patriotic cause they served than Eglantine Lefèvre. On the many occasions the Kaiser took up his quarters at the Château de Merode, near Trélon, and all the roads were ferociously guarded, and not even Crésillon's wife could circulate, it was Eglantine Lefèvre who carried the reports through at night by way of the fields

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and the woods. Her name is written down in the annals of the Hirson Platoon as having sacrificed her life in the execution of her duties. Stricken at the time of the Spanish influenza epidemic, she insisted on carrying the reports through to Trélon, even though she was running a high temperature and ached in every limb. She collapsed on reaching Pierre's house and died the next day.

The Hirson Platoon had now grown to some fifty odd members. The Trélon-Glageon-Fourmies-Avesnes area was covered by an invisible network, which daily caught every German move; but in spite of Pierre's heroic efforts, Hirson itself still eluded his grasp. He had penetrated into the town; he had even succeeded in mounting train-watching posts there to control the important branch lines which converged at this center; but he had been unable to find a courier to surmount the difficulties of the Hirson-Trélon route. It was Gobeaux who came to the rescue.

Knowing Pierre's problem, Gobeaux was naturally all attention when one day two Hirson workmen approached him with the object of planning an escape to join the French Army. Gobeaux was quick to suggest to them that they should join the Army of "The White Lady." One of them, who took the service name of "José," consented, and Gobeaux sent him back immediately to Hirson to mount a courier service between Hirson and Macon.

José, in spite of his willingness, was unable to find any one to help him except his wife, and after making two journeys, covering the long distance alone, he gave up in despair. But Gobeaux, realizing the importance of the Hirson reports, was not to be discouraged. Accompanied by an intimate friend of his, Delchambre, he set out for Hirson, early in January, 1918,

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determined to solve the problem on the spot. Traversing the forest of St. Michel, they managed to reach their destination. There they put fresh courage into José, and after many setbacks succeeded in enrolling two agents to act in a relay with him. They remained long enough to assure themselves that the Hirson train-watching posts had been definitely linked up with Pierre through the Glageon "letter-box."

Jubilant at the success of their mission, the two of them started back on the return journey. They were approaching the frontier, when suddenly out of the night, they heard the traditional "Halt!" There was only one thing to do—they took to their heels. But the two German soldiers who composed the patrol were young, and even though the darkness and the trees prevented use of their rifles, they could run. Gobeaux and his companion realized their only chance was to hide. Crouched behind a bush, they anxiously waited for the soldiers to pass. The soldiers, however, hearing no noise, started searching around. Gobeaux whispered quick instructions to Delchambre. As the soldiers got within reach, the two jumped out on them, and made a grab for their rifles. Each grappled with his man; and, in the hand-to-hand struggle which followed, Gobeaux, in trying to grab his man by the throat, stuck his thumb into his mouth. The German bit into the bone; but Gobeaux was a powerful man—with his free fist he knocked him senseless. Springing to Delchambre's aid, he dealt the other soldier a blow over the head with the butt-end of his rifle. Taking to their heels again, they managed to regain Macon in safety.

Gobeaux nursed a broken thumb for several weeks, but as he philosophically told me after the Armistice, "The Hirson posts were well worth it." What annoyed him most of all was that he had to remain in hiding until his thumb healed: for

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days, the Secret Police searched for a man with a lacerated thumb.

Such a direct fight with Secret Police or German soldier was a rarity. It was confined to the frontier struggles at the two borders, where our agents, often poachers, or smugglers were quick with knife and gun. As a rule, it was hopeless to attempt physical resistance. The spy relied on his wits, and in this he was often more than a match for his German opponent.

The Hirson Platoon functioned until the end of the War without a single arrest—a truly remarkable achievement in the face of the strict German surveillance. Its success was largely due to the paternal guidance of Pierre. Their fervent patriotism, their trust in God, and the affection they had for each other, these were the influences that inspired them.

A remarkable feature not only of the Hirson Platoon, but of the whole "White Lady" organization was family coöpera-tion. Husband, wife, children, even the dog (watching at the door), and often the furniture (a hiding place for compromising documents), each played a part.

Immediately after his return from Trélon, A. 91 went back to Liège with Chauvin. There for a period of six weeks, twice a week, he eagerly scanned the reports; he assisted Dewé and Chauvin in making the necessary criticisms, and watched with satisfaction the gradual extension of his father's platoon. He knew that it was supplying the Allies with the only information which came out of this vital area, and he was justly proud.

A. 91's three months' leave of absence, which General Baucheille had granted him, was about to expire. Dewé and Chauvin reminded us of our promise to fetch him, and once

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again, on November 24th, 1917, it was Charles Willekens who brought him safely into Holland. He had crossed the high-voltage electric wire three times—twice as a spy—in itself a heroic achievement.

After spending a day with him, plying him with eager questions, and listening to his detailed account of every incident that had occurred during his last eventful three months in the interior, I said good-by and wished him good luck in his new adventure. Like Lawrence of Arabia, he was setting out as a seasoned veteran to become a cog in a machine—a recruit in the French Army. He was drafted into the 26th Battalion of the Chasseurs à Pied.

After the War, he entered one of the religious orders.

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CHAPTER VII

COURIERS, FRONTIER PASSAGES, AND SECRET CODES

THOSE small cigarette-shaped rolls of fine tissue paper spelled life and death during the occupation. Vital to the Allies, they contained the information that had to be pushed through to Holland at all costs. And to the Secret Police they were precious, too: they represented the evidence necessary to convict.

"The White Lady," at this time, had agents covering the whole of Belgium and most of occupied France. Dozens of couriers were daily traveling from one "letter-box" to another, facing discovery at any moment. The art was both to conceal the documents, and, if necessary, to be able to get rid of them quickly without detection. Dozens of devices and places of concealment were used, but the most favored was just an ordinary looking cane, similar in appearance to hundreds in daily use. There was a difference, however—it was hollow. Dewé and Chauvin had a man in Liège, who was an expert in constructing these walking sticks. The hook screwed off under the metal initial band, exposing a cavity which could hold about six rolls, each containing at least twenty-five typewritten sheets of tissue paper. Strange to say, although many of these canes were used, the Germans never discovered one of them. Another

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device was a small heavy metal tube, dirty brown in color, just large enough to hold a single tube. It was chiefly used by local couriers, who only had a small volume of reports to transport. Carried in the sleeve, this tube could be dropped quickly without attracting attention.

From a number of courier experiences, I picked out at random a report concerning a young girl, "The White Lady" courier between Liège and Namur. If her documents had been intercepted it would have meant death or life imprisonment.

"Namur! Namur! 'At last!' sighs Juliette with relief, as she gets up to leave the train. In truth, Liège is a long distance off during the occupation, and when one is carrying compromising documents, and funds for 'The White Lady,' one is not sorry to reach one's destination.

"Thus absorbed in thought, Juliette arrives at the barrier—the place where tickets, and identity cards are inspected.

"Instead of the wave of the hand signifying that she can pass on, she hears a vigorous 'Get over there!,' accompanied by a significant gesture. These three simple words have a terrible significance for her. It means being searched and having to furnish an explanation for her journey to Liège. She would like to slip her brother the small compromising roll sewed in a piece of black cloth. But no, it is impossible—the German has his eyes on her.

"She goes into the room indicated by the German secret agent, her mind feverishly at work on how to get rid of the small black object. Victory! Her eye is focussed on the radiator, and with a slight movement of the hand, presto! the compromising roll has disappeared behind it. Ouf! They can come now—she is ready for them.

"Here they are! A sick relative in Liège explains the object of her visit. Remains the search. She is taken into the adjoining room by a German woman, who completely strips her, goes through her hand bag, and examines her clothes, slitting a hem here and there. Nothing is found. She is free.

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"She dresses slowly, and when she passes into the next room again, she finds it empty—the platform is clear, the railway passengers have departed. She thinks of the little black object behind the radiator. She gives a hurried look—it is still there. She picks it up, and once again the Secret Police have been tricked."

If the couriers in the interior had dangers to face, our agents at the frontier had even greater ones to contend with. The Germans knew, as well as we did, that an espionage service in the interior had no utility unless it could communicate with the outside; reports were valueless until they reached Allied General Headquarters. At the frontier every one in the espionage service prepared for a life and death struggle. A study of the Allied espionage organizations which functioned in the occupied territory during the War, discloses that nearly all of them were eventually broken up by either being betrayed or compromised by those who were responsible for the passage of their reports at the frontier.

The War Office Service had undertaken to bring "The White Lady" reports out of the occupied territory, and an examination of the following record of frontier passages, placed at the exclusive disposal of "The White Lady," shows that it kept its word:

Passage I: The "letter-box" was at Liège. It functioned from July, 1917, to December, 1917, at which period it had to be isolated owing to the arrest of some of its members who were involved in helping refugees to escape across the frontier.

Passage II: The "letter-box" was first of all at Hasselt, and then was moved to Tongres. It functioned from December, 1917, to May, 1918, at which period it had to be isolated.

Passage III: "Letter-box" at Liège. It functioned as a reserve passage, through which duplicate reports were sent out from August,

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1917, to January 12th, 1918, on which date one of the couriers was arrested on suspicion. He was released twenty-one days later. The passage was re-mounted, and functioned again from September, 1918, until the Armistice.

Passage IV: This was a reserve passage through which dummy reports were sent out. It was never brought into active use by "The White Lady."

Passage V: "Letter-box" at Antwerp. It functioned as a reserve passage with dummy reports from December, 1917, to April 12th, 1918, on which date one of the couriers was arrested, and the "letter-box" had to be isolated.

Passage VI: "Letter-box" first of all at Maeseyck, and then at Hasselt. It functioned with dummy reports from July, 1917, until March, 1918, at which period it was switched into active service by "The White Lady." For seven months the reports came out regularly twice a week, and then, suddenly, on October 1st, 1918, all its members were arrested by the Secret Police and a whole batch of "White Lady" reports were seized at the same time.

Passage VII: "Letter-box" first of all at Brussels, and then at Hasselt. It functioned from August, 1918, until the Armistice.

To keep the frontier passages open in the face of the ceaseless German vigilance, required untold cunning, loyalty, and meticulous coöperation on the part of the five or six men and women, who were employed at each of them. Above all, the greatest credit is due to Oram and his band of frontier men strung out along the Dutch border; they were not only responsible for the mounting of these passages, but, night and day, they also watched the agents working them.

One of the greatest difficulties which had to be overcome was to keep the reserve frontier passages in a state of readiness for active use. In contrast to the agents in the interior, most of the men and women who worked these frontier passages were mercenary—they had to be given an opportunity to earn

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money. It is true we could have used them in connection with one of the several small espionage organizations which we kept going in the interior independently of "The White Lady," but in doing this we would have established that very contact between our separate services which we were determined to prevent. There was, therefore, no alternative but to send either duplicate or dummy reports through them. This was an expensive procedure, but it achieved its purpose; and, at the time of the Maeseyck arrests, the occasion on which "The White Lady" reports were seized, the duplicate reports had a real utility.

Border characters of every type were used at these frontier passages. For example, there were the smugglers "Tilman" and his son, who, on their smuggling trips across the Meuse, at Maeseyck, never forgot that extra package, "The White Lady" reports. Then there was that hardy band of frontier guides who frequented the scrub and brush of the Campine, the area to the north of Liège, bordering on the Dutch frontier. Strong, fleet of foot, fearless, quick with the knife and in the use of their guns, they were a terror to the German sentries and Secret Police detailed to watch them. Smugglers and poachers in peace-time, they knew every inch of the frontier, and the passing of refugees, soldiers' letters, and, finally, spy reports, came natural to them. They kept faith with their own gang rather than with any country. Among this band we were fortunate to find two of our most valued border agents. To Charles Willekens we owed a debt we could never repay—a spy to be taken into Belgium through the high-voltage electric wire, or a compromised agent to be brought out, it was he who never failed us. A worthy assistant was his companion, Leopold Toelen. To Toelen we owed the frontier passage at

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Luiksgestel through which our first contact with "The White Lady" was made. In his courier system was a clever conductor on the inter-urban railway between Liège and Oostham who threw the reports off to one of Toelen's men hiding in the grass near a level crossing. Sometimes it was the remains of a meal, at other times it was an old newspaper, which the conductor casually discarded.

But these passages at the frontier were the exception. It was generally a peasant at the frontier, who did the passing. Behind his mask of peasant stupidness, there lurked a cunning which often completely outwitted the Germans. He was often arrested, but the job was to find the reports: he rarely had them on him. Sometimes they were hidden in a clod of earth; sometimes, if he was working in a potato field, it would be a big tuber that encased the precious roll; and often they were buried the day before near the high-voltage electric wire where, with one quick movement, they could be pulled out of their hiding place and thrown across the wire to the Dutch peasant—the confederate on the other side.

To Dewé's and Chauvin's scientific minds, these frontier methods at first seemed crude. They were continually thinking in terms either of a secret telephone wire through to Holland, or of the use of wireless.

In the wireless field, Chauvin carried out considerable experimental work trying to evolve some scheme by which they could evade the German directional finders; but portability, which was essential, was impossible with the heavy sending sets of those days. When reminiscing, Chauvin likes to tell how at this period he forgot a package one day under the seat of a Liège street car. It contained his wireless receiving set. Suddenly realizing his loss, he chased after the car. A German

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officer who happened to be on the rear platform thoroughly enjoyed the schoolboy antics of the bearded middle-aged professor; he yelled encouragement, and, wishing to be useful, handed him the compromising package, adding, "Well done!" "Of course, I should have let it go," Chauvin admits, "but I had spent several days making it; and impulse overcame my prudence."

With the telephone, Dewé and Chauvin worked even more assiduously. Their first thought naturally was to run an underground wire through to Holland, and after considerable search, they found a house near the frontier, in the Hasselt sector, which could serve for their telephonists. But the difficulties involved in running the wire from the house to a point across the frontier proved unsurmountable. Finally, in a desperate attempt to achieve their objective, Dandrimont, one of their agents, was electrocuted. As a result of this, they reluctantly abandoned their efforts in this area.

Chauvin still clung to the idea, however, and it was he who came forward with a new plan. It was based on the principle that if the earth is used as a return circuit in a field telephone installation, messages can be intercepted by another similar installation, with its connecting wire running parallel to that of the first. Once again, therefore, they started looking for a suitable emplacement. In his enthusiasm, Chauvin soon discovered, in the Maestricht sector of the Belgian-Dutch border, what he was looking for. Here the Meuse separates the two countries, and because of the water, there was little surveillance. He not only found in this area two cottages about a hundred yards apart between which they could run an underground telephone wire, but on the Dutch side opposite there was a big estate owned by a Dutchman who was reputed to be very

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pro-Belgian. All this happened shortly before Lemaire was sent out on his mission to Holland, which resulted in "The White Lady" becoming attached to us. When he entered Holland he sounded the Dutchman out. He was completely successful not only in obtaining permission for us to install the second line on the man's property, but he was also promised that prying eyes would be kept away.

I am afraid I was responsible for not putting Chauvin's scheme into practice. I had no doubt in my mind that theoretically it would work—we had intercepted German messages in this way at the front—but "The White Lady" reports were coming through regularly at the frontier, and I dreaded making a change. Besides, it would have involved putting agents of "The White Lady" at the frontier—a radical departure from our system, which called for complete isolation of frontier agents from the main organization in the interior, except, of course, for the necessary "letter-box." So I stalled and though I did get over from England the necessary telephone apparatus, Dewé and Chauvin were still urging me to take action when the Armistice was declared.

Fully realizing the dangers at the frontier and the instability of the best of frontier passages, we prepared ourselves for the worst. We knew "The White Lady" reports would eventually fall into the hands of the Secret Police. When this happened, both "The White Lady" and ourselves were determined that it should have no harmful effect. We had to see to it, therefore, that the reports contained no indication of source; and to do this, we had to resort to the use of codes.

The first step was to give numbers to the various important centers in the occupied territory. Liège became 0, Namur 40, Brussels 100, Chimay 80, Fourmies 200, and so on. Train-watch-

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ing posts were indicated in a similar way; for example, the five posts at Namur, on the Liège, Charleroi, Arlon, Dinant, and Brussels lines, were numbered from 41 to 45 consecutively, and the directions were shown by the numbers allocated to the stations.

Names, addresses, and details of organization were rarely committed to paper. When this had to be done, codes were similarly used. In the interior, the code system generally employed was based on some passage or rhymed verse which was either universally known, or could be committed to memory. For some time "The White Lady" used the Lord's Prayer, the Pater noster. Each letter was indicated by two numbers separated by a comma. The first number gave the position of the word in the passage; while the second number gave the position of the letter in the word. Thus the letter "e" could be written, 1,4; 2,5; or by as many combinations as there were "e's" in the Prayer. Numbers were written as words and then coded. Letters such as "x," not contained in the Prayer, were given special combination numbers which had to be memorized. The Pater only has six letters of the alphabet missing.

To complicate the system, the parent passage was changed from time to time. On several occasions, "The White Lady" cleverly used the printed instructions on the back of their identity cards. By German ordinance the inhabitants had to carry these cards on their person, and so a code was always available. The disadvantage of this system was that a single word of betrayal would have immediately given the Germans the key.

Between "The White Lady" and the War Office Service in Holland a much more complicated code system was employed. It was a combination of a pocket dictionary and a column of arbitrary numbers marked on a light cardboard

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strip. This strip, the size of the dictionary page, was placed up against the column of words, and as the spacing was the same, a number fell opposite each word. To find the code number for a word such as "here," the word would be turned up in the dictionary, say on page 434; the slip would now be placed in position, and opposite "here" we would see the number, say 495; the code number for "here" would then be 495434. This could be made more complicated by multiplying this number by a common factor, or adding or subtracting a fixed sum. As the numbers on the slip were changed continually, and as there are hundreds of dictionaries of all sizes, editions, and languages in existence, this dictionary code was undecipherable without a key. For letters of the alphabet, needed for spelling out a name or an address, and for military terms not given in the dictionary, we used a grid of vertical and horizontal columns of squares. Thus if the letter "a" fell in the first row horizontally, and the third row vertically, its code number was 13 and four imaginary numbers were then added to make it a six figure number. A special six figure number was used as a prefix to indicate the transition from the dictionary to the grid code. By having several squares for each vowel, detection by the repetition system was avoided; besides, this grid code was changed at regular intervals.

Having thus eliminated all possibility of the Secret Police gaining any knowledge of "The White Lady" organization from their reports, we still had to take the necessary measures to prevent arrests among the frontier passage agents spreading to "The White Lady" through their "letter-boxes." To achieve this purpose, "The White Lady" made its Counter-Espionage Section under Neujean the liaison between the frontier "letter-boxes" and itself. No wiser step could have been taken, for

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