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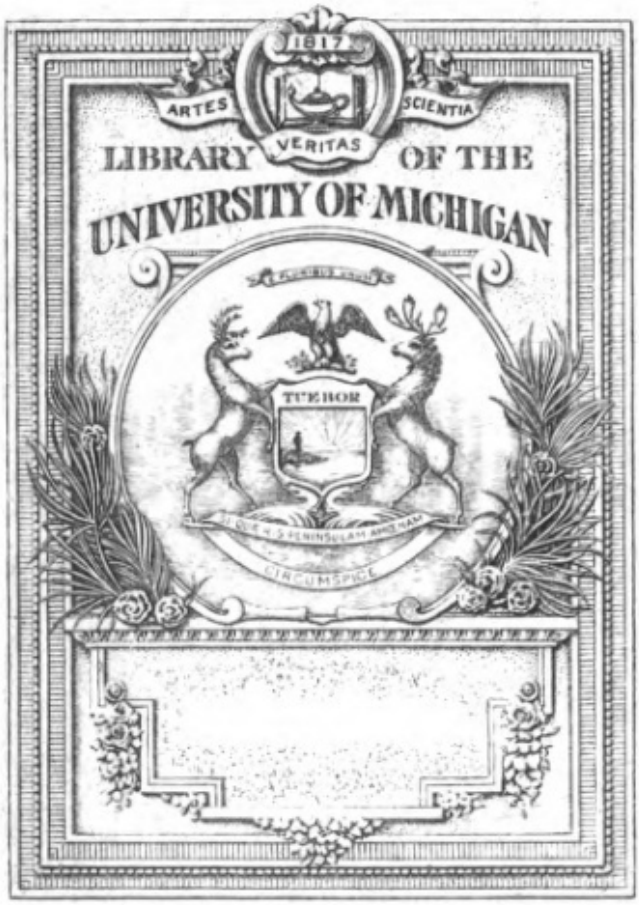


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# THE LOST NAVAL PAPERS

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# THE
# LOST NAVAL PAPERS

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE

AUTHOR OF "JITNY AND THE BOYS"

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1917

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# PART I

## *WILLIAM DAWSON*

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# CHAPTER I

## A STORY AND A VISIT

At the beginning of the month of September, 1916, there appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine* a story entitled "The Lost Naval Papers." I had told this story at second-hand, for the incidents had not occurred within my personal experience. One of the principals—to whom I had allotted the temporary name of Richard Cary—was an intimate friend, but I had never met the Scotland Yard officer whom I called William Dawson, and was not at all anxious to make his official acquaintance. To me he then seemed an inhuman, icy-blooded "sleuth," a being of great national importance, but repulsive and dangerous as an associate. Yet by a turn of Fortune's wheel I came not only to know William Dawson, but to work with him, and almost to like him. His penetrative efficiency compelled one's admiration, and his unconcealed vanity showed that he did not stand wholly outside the human family. Yet I never felt safe with Dawson. In his presence, and when I knew that somewhere round the corner he was carrying on his mysterious investigations, I was perpetually apprehensive of his hand upon my shoulder and his

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bracelets upon my wrists. I was unconscious of crime, but the Defence of the Realm Regulations —which are to Dawson a new fount of wisdom and power—create so many fresh offences every week that it is difficult for the most timidly loyal of citizens to keep his innocency up to date. I have doubtless trespassed many times, for I have Dawson's assurance that my present freedom is due solely to his reprehensible softness towards me. Whenever I have showed independence of spirit—of which, God knows, I have little in these days—Dawson would pull out his terrible red volumes of ever-expanding Regulations and make notes of my committed crimes. The Act itself could be printed on a sheet of notepaper, but it has given birth to a whole library of Regulations. Thus he bent me to his will as he had my poor friend Richard Cary.

The mills of Scotland Yard grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small. There is nothing showy about them. They work by system, not by inspiration. Though Dawson was not specially intelligent —in some respects almost stupid—he was dreadfully, terrifyingly efficient, because he was part of the slowly grinding Scotland Yard machine.

As this book properly begins with my published story of "The Lost Naval Papers," I will reprint it here exactly as it was written for the readers of *The Cornhill Magazine* in September, 1916.

* * * * * *

## I. Baiting the Trap

This story—which contains a moral for those fearful folk who exalt everything German—was

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told to me by Richard Cary, the accomplished naval correspondent of a big paper in the North of England. I have known him and his enthusiasm for the White Ensign for twenty years. He ,springs from an old naval stock, the Carys of North Devon, and has devoted his life to the study of the Sea Service. He had for so long been accustomed to move freely among shipyards and navy men, and was trusted so completely, that the veil of secrecy which dropped in August 1914 between the Fleets and the world scarcely existed for him. Everything which he desired to know for the better understanding of the real work of the Navy came to him officially or unofficially. When, therefore, he states that the Naval Notes with which this story deals would have been of incalculable value to the enemy, I accept his word without hesitation. I have myself seen some of them, and they made me tremble—for Cary's neck. I pressed him to write this story himself, but he refused. "No," said he, "I have told you the yarn just as it happened; write it yourself. I am a dull dog, quite efficient at handling hard facts and making scientific deductions from them, but with no eye for the picturesque details. I give it to you." He rose to go—Cary had been lunching with me—but paused for an instant upon my front doorstep. "If you insist upon it," added he, smiling, "I don't mind sharing in the plunder."

It was in the latter part of May 1916. Cary was hard at work one morning in his rooms in the Northern City where he had established his headquarters. His study table was littered with papers—notes, diagrams, and newspaper cuttings—and he

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was laboriously reducing the apparent chaos into an orderly series of chapters upon the Navy's Work which he proposed to publish after the war was over. It was not designed to be an exciting book—Cary has no dramatic instinct—but it would be full of fine sound stuff, close accurate detail, and clear analysis. Day by day for more than twenty months he had been collecting details of every phase of the Navy's operations, here a little and there a little. He had recently returned from a confidential tour of the shipyards and naval bases, and had exercised his trained eye upon checking and amplifying what he had previously learned. While his recollection of this tour was fresh he was actively writing up his Notes and revising the rough early draft of his book. More than once it had occurred to him that his accumulations of Notes were dangerous explosives to store in a private house. They were becoming so full and so accurate that the enemy would have paid any sum or have committed any crime to secure possession of them. Cary is not nervous or imaginative—have I not said that he springs from a naval stock?—but even he now and then felt anxious. He would, I believe, have slept peacefully though knowing that a delicately primed bomb lay beneath his bed, for personal risks troubled him little, but the thought that hurt to his country might come from his well-meant labours sometimes rapped against his nerves. A few days before his patriotic conscience had been stabbed by no less a personage than Admiral Jellicoe, who, speaking to a group of naval students which included Cary, had said: "We have concealed nothing from you, for we trust absolutely to your

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discretion. Remember what you have seen, but do not make any notes." Yet here at this moment was Cary disregarding the orders of a Commander-in-Chief whom he worshipped. He tried to square his conscience by reflecting that no more than three people knew of the existence of his Notes or of the book which he was writing from them, and that each one of those three was as trustworthy as himself. So he went on collating, comparing, writing, and the heap upon his table grew bigger under his hands.

The clock had just struck twelve upon that morning when a servant entered and said, "A gentleman to see you, sir, upon important business. His name is Mr. Dawson."

Cary jumped up and went to his dining-room, where the visitor was waiting. The name had meant nothing to him, but the instant his eyes fell upon Mr. Dawson he remembered that he was the chief Scotland Yard officer who had come north to teach the local police how to keep track of the German agents who infested the shipbuilding centres. Cary had met Dawson more than once, and had assisted him with his intimate local knowledge. He greeted his visitor with smiling courtesy, but Dawson did not smile. His first words, indeed, came like shots from an automatic pistol.

"Mr. Cary," said he, "I want to see your Naval Notes."

Cary was staggered, for the three people whom I have mentioned did not include Mr. Dawson.

"Certainly," said he, "I will show them to you if you ask officially. But how in the world did you hear anything about them?"

"I am afraid that a good many people know

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about them, most undesirable people too. If you will show them to me—I am asking officially—I will tell you what I know."

Cary led the way to his study. Dawson glanced round the room, at the papers heaped upon the table, at the tall windows bare of curtains—Cary, who loved light and sunshine, hated curtains—and growled. Then he locked the door, pulled down the thick blue blinds required by the East Coast lighting orders, and switched on the electric lights though it was high noon in May. "That's better," said he. "You are an absolutely trustworthy man, Mr. Cary. I know all about you. But you are damned careless. That bare window is overlooked from half a dozen flats. You might as well do your work in the street."

Dawson picked up some of the papers, and their purport was explained to him by Cary. "I don't know anything of naval details," said he, "but I don't need any evidence of the value of the stuff here. The enemy wants it, wants it badly; that is good enough for me."

"But," remonstrated Cary, "no one knows of these papers, or of the use to which I am putting them, except my son in the Navy, my wife (who has not read a line of them), and my publisher in London."

"Hum!" commented Dawson. "Then how do you account for this?"

He opened his leather despatch-case and drew forth a parcel carefully wrapped up in brown paper. Within the wrapping was a large white envelope of the linen woven paper used for registered letters, and generously sealed. To Cary's surprise, for the envelope appeared to be secure, Dawson cautiously

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opened it so as not to break the seal which was adhering to the flap and drew out a second smaller envelope, also sealed. This he opened in the same delicate way and took out a third; from the third he drew a fourth, and so on until eleven empty envelopes had been added to the litter piled upon Cary's table, and the twelfth, a small one, remained in Dawson's hands.

"Did you ever see anything so childish?" observed he, indicating the envelopes. "A big, registered, sealed Chinese puzzle like that is just crying out to be opened. We would have seen the inside of that one even if it had been addressed to the Lord Mayor, and not to—well, someone in whom we are deeply interested, though he does not know it."

Cary, who had been fascinated by the succession of sealed envelopes, stretched out his hand towards one of them. "Don't touch," snapped out Dawson. "Your clumsy hands would break the seals, and then there would be the devil to pay. Of course all these envelopes were first opened in my office. It takes a dozen years to train men to open sealed envelopes so that neither flap nor seal is broken, and both can be again secured without showing a sign of disturbance. It is a trade secret."

Dawson's expert fingers then opened the twelfth envelope, and he produced a letter. "Now, Mr. Cary, if we had not known you and also known that you were absolutely honest and loyal—though dangerously simple-minded and careless in the matter of windows—this letter would have been very awkward indeed for you. It runs: 'Hagan arrives 10.30 p.m. Wednesday to get Cary's Naval



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Notes. Meet him. Urgent.' Had we not known you, Mr. Richard Cary might have been asked to explain how Hagan knew all about his Naval Notes and was so very confident of being able to get them."

Cary smiled. "I have often felt," said he, "especially in war-time, that it was most useful to be well known to the police. You may ask me anything you like, and I will do my best to answer. I confess that I am aghast at the searchlight of inquiry which has suddenly been turned upon my humble labours. My son at sea knows nothing of the Notes except what I have told him in my letters, my wife has not read a line of them, and my publisher is the last man to talk. I seem to have suddenly dropped into the middle of a detective story." The poor man scratched his head and smiled ruefully at the Scotland Yard officer.

"Mr. Cary," said Dawson, "those windows of yours would account for anything. You have been watched for a long time, and I am perfectly sure that our friend Hagan and his associates here know precisely in what drawer of that desk you keep your Naval Papers. Your flat is easy to enter—I had a look round before coming in to-day—and on Wednesday night (that is to-morrow) there will be a scientific burglary here and your Notes will be stolen."

"Oh no, they won't," cried Cary. "I will take them down this afternoon to my office and lock them up in the big safe. It will put me to a lot of bother, for I shall also have to lock up there the chapters of my book."

"You newspaper men ought all to be locked up yourselves. You are a cursed nuisance to honest,

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hard-worked Scotland Yard men like me. But you mistake the object of my visit. I want this flat to be entered to-morrow night, and I want your Naval Papers to be stolen."

For a moment the wild thought came to Cary that this man Dawson—the chosen of the Yard—was himself a German Secret Service agent, and must have shown in his eyes some signs of the suspicion, for Dawson laughed loudly. "No, Mr. Cary, I am not in the Kaiser's pay, nor are you, though the case against you might be painted pretty black. This man Hagan is on our string in London, and we want him very badly indeed. Not to arrest—at least not just yet—but to keep running round showing us his pals and all their little games. He is an Irish-American, a very unbenevolent neutral, to whom we want to give a nice, easy, happy time, so that he can mix himself up thoroughly with the spy business and wrap a rope many times round his neck. We will pull on to the end when we have finished with him, but not a minute too soon. He is too precious to be frightened. Did you ever come across such an ass"—Dawson contemptuously indicated the pile of sealed envelopes; "he must have soaked himself in American dime novels and cinema crime films. He will be of more use to us than a dozen of our best officers. I feel that I love Hagan, and won't have him disturbed. When he comes here to-morrow night, he shall be seen, but not heard. He shall enter this room, lift your Notes, which shall be in their usual drawer, and shall take them safely away. After that I rather fancy that we shall enjoy ourselves, and that the salt will stick very firmly upon Hagan's little tail."

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Cary did not at all like this plan; it might offer amusement and instruction to the police, but seemed to involve himself in an excessive amount of responsibility. "Will it not be far too risky to let him take my Notes even if you do shadow him closely afterwards? He will get them copied and scattered amongst a score of agents, one of whom may get the information through to Germany. You know your job, of course, but the risk seems too big for me. After all, they are my Notes, and I would far sooner burn them now than that the Germans should see a line of them."

Dawson laughed again. "You are a dear, simple soul, Mr. Cary; it does one good to meet you. Why on earth do you suppose I came here to-day if it were not to enlist your help? Hagan is going to take all the risks; you and I are not looking for any. He is going to steal some Naval Notes, but they will not be those which lie on this table. I myself will take charge of those and of the chapters of your most reprehensible book. You shall prepare, right now, a beautiful new artistic set of notes calculated to deceive. They must be accurate where any errors would be spotted, but wickedly false wherever deception would be good for Fritz's health. I want you to get down to a real plant. This letter shall be sealed up again in its twelve silly envelopes and go by registered post to Hagan's correspondent. You shall have till to-morrow morning to invent all those things which we want Fritz to believe about the Navy. Make us out to be as rotten as you plausibly can. Give him some heavy losses to gloat over and to tempt him out of harbour. Don't overdo it, but mix up your fiction with enough facts to keep it sweet and make it

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sound convincing. If you do your work well—and the Naval authorities here seem to think a lot of you—Hagan will believe in your Notes, and will try to get them to his German friends at any cost or risk, which will be exactly what we want of him. Then, when he has served our purpose, he will find that we—have—no—more—use—for—him."

Dawson accompanied this slow, harmlessly sounding sentence with a grim and nasty smile. Cary, before whose eyes flashed for a moment the vision of a chill dawn, cold grey walls, and a silent firing party, shuddered. It was a dirty task to lay so subtle a trap even for a dirty Irish-American spy. His honest English soul revolted at the call upon his brains and knowledge, but common sense told him that in this way, Dawson's way, he could do his country a very real service. For a few minutes he mused over the task set to his hand, and then spoke.

"All right. I think that I can put up exactly what you want. The faked Notes shall be ready when you come to-morrow. I will give the whole day to them."

In the morning the new set of Naval Papers was ready, and their purport was explained in detail to Dawson, who chuckled joyously. "This is exactly what Admiral —— wants, and it shall get through to Germany by Fritz's own channels. I have misjudged you, Mr. Cary; I thought you little better than a fool, but that story here of a collision in a fog and the list of damaged Queen Elizabeths in dock would have taken in even me. Fritz will suck it down like cream. I like that effort even better than your grave comments on damaged turbines

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and worn-out gun tubes. You are a genius, Mr. Cary, and I must take you to lunch with the Admiral this very day. You can explain the plant better than I can, and he is dying to hear all about it. Oh, by the way, he particularly wants a description of the failure to complete the latest batch of big shell fuses, and the shortage of lyddite. You might get that done before the evening. Now for the burglary. Do nothing, nothing at all, outside your usual routine. Come home at your usual hour, go to bed as usual, and sleep soundly if you can. Should you hear any noise in the night, put your head under the bedclothes. Say nothing to Mrs. Cary unless you are obliged, and for God's sake don't let any woman—wife, daughter, or maid-servant—disturb my pearl of a burglar while he is at work. He must have a clear run, with everything exactly as he expects to find it. Can I depend upon you?"

"I don't pretend to like the business," said Cary, "but you can depend upon me to the letter of my orders."

"Good," cried Dawson. "That is all I want."

## II. The Trap Closes

Cary heard no noise, though he lay awake for most of the night, listening intently. The flat seemed to be more quiet even than usual. There was little traffic in the street below, and hardly a step broke the long silence of the night. Early in the morning—at six B.S.T.—Cary slipped out of bed, stole down to his study, and pulled open the deep drawer in which he had placed the bundle of faked Naval Notes. They had gone! So the Spy-

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Burglar had come, and, carefully shepherded by Dawson's sleuth-hounds, had found the primrose path easy for his crime. To Cary, the simple, honest gentleman, the whole plot seemed to be utterly revolting—justified, of course, by the country's needs in time of war, but none the less revolting. There is nothing of glamour in the Secret Service, nothing of romance, little even of excitement. It is a cold-blooded exercise of wits against wits, of spies against spies. The amateur plays a fish upon a line and gives him a fair run for his life, but the professional fisherman—to whom a salmon is a people's food—nets him coldly and expeditiously as he comes in from the sea.

Shortly after breakfast there came a call from Dawson on the telephone. "All goes well. Come to my office as soon as possible." Cary found Dawson bubbling with professional satisfaction. "It was beautiful," cried he. "Hagan was met at the train, taken to a place we know of, and shadowed by us tight as wax. We now know all his associates —the swine have not even the excuse of being German. He burgled your flat himself while one of his gang watched outside. Never mind where I was; you would be surprised if I told you; but I saw everything. He has the faked papers, is busy making copies, and this afternoon is going down the river in a steamer to get a glimpse of the shipyards and docks and check your Notes as far as can be done. Will they stand all right?"

"Quite all right," said Cary. "The obvious things were given correctly."

"Good. We will be in the steamer."

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Cary went that afternoon, quite unchanged in appearance by Dawson's order. "If you try to disguise yourself," declared that expert, "you will be spotted at once. Leave the refinements to us." Dawson himself went as an elderly dug-out officer with the rank marks of a colonel, and never spoke a word to Cary upon the whole trip down and up the teeming river. Dawson's men were scattered here and there—one a passenger of inquiring mind, another a deckhand, yet a third—a pretty girl in khaki—sold tea and cakes in the vessel's saloon. Hagan—who, Cary heard afterwards, wore the brass-bound cap and blue kit of a mate in the American merchant service—was never out of sight for an instant of Dawson or of one of his troupe. He busied himself with a strong pair of marine glasses, and now and then asked innocent questions of the ship's deckhands. He had evidently himself once served as a sailor. One deckhand, an idle fellow to whom Hagan was very civil, told his questioner quite a lot of interesting details about the Navy ships, great and small, which could be seen upon the building slips. All these details tallied strangely with those recorded in Cary's Notes. The trip up and down the river was a great success for Hagan and for Dawson, but for Cary it was rather a bore. He felt somehow out of the picture. In the evening Dawson called at Cary's office and broke in upon him. "We had a splendid trip to-day," said he. "It exceeded my utmost hopes. Hagan thinks no end of your Notes, but he is not taking any risks. He leaves in the morning for Glasgow to do the Clyde and to check some more of your stuff. Would you like to come?" Cary remarked that he was rather busy, and that

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these river excursions, though doubtless great fun for Dawson, were rather poor sport for himself. Dawson laughed joyously—he was a cheerful soul when he had a spy upon his string. "Come along," said he. "See the thing through. I should like you to be in at the death." Cary observed that he had no stomach for cold, damp dawns and firing parties.

"I did not quite mean that," replied Dawson. "Those closing ceremonies are still strictly private. But you should see the chase through to a finish. You are a newspaper man, and should be eager for new experiences."

"I will come," said Cary, rather reluctantly. "But I warn you that my sympathies are steadily going over to Hagan. The poor devil does not look to have a dog's chance against you."

"He hasn't," said Dawson, with great satisfaction.

Cary, to whom the wonderful Clyde was as familiar as the river near his own home, found the second trip almost as wearisome as the first. But not quite. He was now able to recognise Hagan, who again appeared as a brass-bounder, and did not affect to conceal his deep interest in the naval panorama offered by the river. Nothing of real importance can, of course, be learned from a casual steamer trip, but Hagan seemed to think otherwise, for he was always either watching through his glasses or asking apparently artless questions of passengers or passing deckhands. Again a sailor seemed disposed to be communicative; he pointed out more than one monster in steel, red raw with surface rust, and gave particulars of a completed power which would have surprised the Admiralty

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Superintendent. They would not, however, have surprised Mr. Cary, in whose ingenious brain they had been conceived. This second trip, like the first, was declared by Dawson to have been a great success. "Did you know me?" he asked. "I was a clean-shaven naval doctor, about as unlike the army colonel of the first trip as a pigeon is unlike a gamecock. Hagan is off to London to-night by the North-Western. There are two copies of your Notes. One is going by Edinburgh and the east coast, and another by the Midland. Hagan has the original masterpiece. I will look after him and leave the two other messengers to my men. I have been on to the Yard by 'phone, and have arranged that all three shall have passports for Holland. The two copies shall reach the Kaiser, bless him, but I really must have Hagan's set of Notes for my Museum."

"And what will become of Hagan?" asked Cary.

"Come and see," said Mr. Dawson.

Dawson entertained Cary at dinner in a private room at the Station Hotel, waited upon by one of his own confidential men. "Nobody ever sees me," he observed, with much satisfaction, "though I am everywhere." (I suspect that Dawson is not without his little vanities.) "Except in my office and with people whom I know well, I am always some one else. The first time I came to your house I wore uniform, and the second time looked like a gas inspector. You saw only the real Dawson. When one has got the passion for the chase in one's blood, one cannot bide for long in a stuffy office. As I have a jewel of an assistant, I can always escape and follow up my own victims. This man

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Hagan is a black heartless devil. Don't waste your sympathy on him, Mr. Cary. He took money from us quite lately to betray the silly asses of Sinn Feiners, and now, thinking us hoodwinked, is after more money from the Kaiser. He is of the type that would sell his own mother and buy a mistress with the money. He's not worth your pity. We use him and his like for just so long as they can be useful, and then the jaws of the trap close. By letting him take those faked Notes we have done a fine stroke for the Navy, for the Yard, and for Bill Dawson. We have got into close touch with four new German agents here and two more down south. We shan't seize them yet; just keep them hanging on and use them. That's the game. I am never anxious about an agent when I know him and can keep him watched. Anxious, bless you; I love him like a cat loves a mouse. I've had some spies on my string ever since the war began; I wouldn't have them touched or worried for the world. Their correspondence tells me everything, and if a letter to Holland which they haven't written slips in sometimes, it's useful, very useful, as useful almost as your faked Notes."

Half an hour before the night train was due to leave for the South, Dawson, very simply but effectively changed in appearance—for Hagan knew by sight the real Dawson—led Cary to the middle sleeping-coach on the train. "I have had Hagan put in No. 5," he said, "and you and I will take Nos. 4 and 6. No. 5 is an observation berth; there is one fixed up for us on this sleeping-coach. Come in here." He pulled Cary into No. 4, shut the door, and pointed to a small wooden knob set a few inches below the luggage rack. "If one

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unscrews that knob one can see into the next berth, No. 5. No. 6 is fitted in the same way, so that we can rake No. 5 from both sides. But, mind you, on no account touch those knobs until the train is moving fast and until you have switched out the lights. If No. 5 was dark when you opened the peep-hole, a ray of light from your side would give the show away. And unless there was a good deal of vibration and rattle in the train you might be heard. Now cut away to No. 6, fasten the door, and go to bed. I shall sit up and watch, but there is nothing for you to do."

Hagan appeared in due course, was shown into No. 5 berth, and the train started. Cary asked himself whether he should go to bed as advised or sit up reading. He decided to obey Dawson's orders, but to take a look in upon Hagan before settling down for the journey. He switched off his lights, climbed upon the bed, and carefully unscrewed the little knob which was like the one shown to him by Dawson. A beam of light stabbed the darkness of his berth, and putting his eye with some difficulty to the hole—one's nose gets so confoundedly in the way—he saw Hagan comfortably arranging himself for the night. The spy had no suspicion of his watchers on both sides, for, after settling himself in bed, he unwrapped a flat parcel and took out a bundle of blue papers, which Cary at once recognised as the originals of his stolen Notes. Hagan went through them—he had put his suit-case across his knees to form a desk—and carefully made marginal jottings. Cary, who had often tried to write in trains, could not but admire the man's laborious patience. He painted his letters and figures over and over again, in order to

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secure distinctness, in spite of the swaying of the train, and frequently stopped to suck the point of his pencil.

"I suppose," thought Cary, "that Dawson yonder is just gloating over his prey, but for my part I feel an utterly contemptible beast. Never again will I set a trap for even the worst of my fellow-creatures." He put back the knob, went to bed, and passed half the night in extreme mental discomfort and the other half in snatching brief intervals of sleep. It was not a pleasant journey.

Dawson did not come out of his berth at Euston until after Hagan had left the station in a taxicab, much to Cary's surprise, and then was quite ready, even anxious, to remain for breakfast at the hotel. He explained his strange conduct. "Two of my men," said he, as he wallowed in tea and fried soles —one cannot get Dover soles in the weary North —"who travelled in ordinary compartments, are after Hagan in two taxis, so that if one is delayed, the other will keep touch. Hagan's driver also has had a police warning, so that our spy is in a barbed-wire net. I shall hear before very long all about him."

Cary and Dawson spent the morning at the hotel with a telephone beside them; every few minutes the bell would ring, and a whisper of Hagan's movements steal over the wires into the ears of the spider Dawson. He reported progress to Cary with ever-increasing satisfaction.

"Hagan has applied for and been granted a passport to Holland, and has booked a passage in the boat which leaves Harwich to-night for the Hook. We will go with him. The other two

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spies, with the copies, haven't turned up yet, but they are all right. My men will see them safe across into Dutch territory, and make sure that no blundering Customs officer interferes with their papers. This time the way of transgressors shall be very soft. As for Hagan, he is not going to arrive."

"I don't quite understand why you carry on so long with him," said Cary, who, though tired, could not but feel intense interest in the perfection of the police system and in the serene confidence of Dawson. The Yard could, it appeared, do unto the spies precisely what Dawson chose to direct.

"Hagan is an American citizen," explained Dawson. "If he had been a British subject I would have taken him at Euston—we have full evidence of the burglary, and of the stolen papers in his suit-case. But as he is a damned unbenevolent neutral, and the American Government is very touchy, we must prove his intention to sell the papers to Germany. Then we can deal with him by secret court-martial as a spy detected in the act of spying. The journey to Holland will prove this intention. Hagan has been most useful to us in Ireland, and now in the North of England and in Scotland, but he is too enterprising and too daring to be left any longer on the string. I will draw the ends together at the Hook."

"I did not want to go to Holland," said Cary to me, when telling his story. "I was utterly sick and disgusted with the whole cold-blooded game of cat and mouse, but the police needed my evidence about the Notes and the burglary, and

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did not intend to let me slip out of their clutches. Dawson was very civil and pleasant, but I was in fact as tightly held upon his string as was the wretched Hagan. So I went on to Holland with that quick-change artist, and watched him come on board the steamer at Parkeston Quay, dressed as a rather German-looking commercial traveller, eager for war commissions upon smuggled goods. This sounds absurd, but his get-up seemed somehow to suggest the idea. Then I went below. Dawson always kept away from me whenever Hagan might have seen us together."

The passage across to Holland was free from incident; there was no sign that we were at war, and Continental traffic was being carried serenely on, within easy striking distance of the German submarine base at Zeebrugge. The steamer had drawn in to the Hook beside the train, and Hagan was approaching the gangway, suit-case in hand. The man was on the edge of safety; once upon Dutch soil, Dawson could not have laid hands upon him. He would have been a neutral citizen in a neutral country, and no English warrant would run against him. But between Hagan and the gangway suddenly interposed the tall form of the ship's captain; instantly the man was ringed about by officers, and before he could say a word or move a hand he was gripped hard and led across the deck to the steamer's chart-house. Therein sat Dawson, the real, undisguised Dawson, and beside him sat Richard Cary. Hagan's face, which two minutes earlier had been glowing with triumph and with the anticipation of German gold beyond the dreams of avarice, went white as chalk. He staggered and gasped as one stabbed to the heart, and dropped

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into a chair. His suit-case fell from his relaxed fingers to the floor.

"Give him a stiff brandy-and-soda," directed Dawson, almost kindly, and when the victim's colour had ebbed back a little from his overcharged heart, and he had drunk deep of the friendly cordial, the detective put him out of pain. The game of cat and mouse was over.

"It is all up, Hagan," said the detective gently. "Face the music and make the best of it, my poor friend. This is Mr. Richard Cary, and you have not for a moment been out of our sight since you left London for the North four days ago."

* * *

When I had completed the writing of his story I showed the MS. to Richard Cary, who was pleased to express a general approval. "Not at all bad, Copplestone," said he, "not at all bad. You have clothed my dry bones in real flesh and blood. But you have missed what to me is the outstanding feature of the whole affair, that which justifies to my mind the whole rather grubby business. Let me give you two dates. On May 25 two copies of my faked Notes were shepherded through to Holland and reached the Germans; on May 31 was fought the Battle of Jutland. Can the brief space between these dates have been merely an accident? I cannot believe it. No, I prefer to believe that in my humble way I induced the German Fleet to issue forth and to risk an action which, under more favourable conditions for us, would have resulted in their utter destruction. I may be wrong, but I am happy in retaining my faith."

"What became of Hagan?" I asked, for I

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wished to bring the narrative to a clean artistic finish.

"I am not sure," answered Cary, "though I gave evidence as ordered by the court-martial. But I rather think that I have here Hagan's epitaph." He took out his pocket-book, and drew forth a slip of paper upon which was gummed a brief newspaper cutting. This he handed to me, and I read as follows:

> "The War Office announces that a prisoner who was charged with espionage and recently tried by court-martial at the Westminster Guildhall was found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was duly confirmed and carried out yesterday morning."

* * *

Two months passed. Summer, what little there was of it, had gone, and my spirits were oppressed by the wet and fog and dirt of November in the North. I desired neither to write nor to read. My one overpowering longing was to go to sleep until the war was over and then to awake in a new world in which a decent civilised life would once more be possible.

In this unhappy mood I was seated before my study fire when a servant brought me a card. "A gentleman," said she, "wishes to see you. I said that you were engaged, but he insisted. He's a terrible man, sir."

I looked at the card, annoyed at being disturbed; but at the sight of it my torpor fell from me, for upon it was written the name of that detective



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officer whom in my story I had called William Dawson, and in the corner were the letters "C I.D." (Criminal Investigation Department). I had become a criminal, and was about to be investigated!

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# CHAPTER II

## AT CLOSE QUARTERS

DAWSON entered, and we stood eyeing one another like two strange dogs. Neither spoke for some seconds, and then, recollecting that I was a host in the presence of a visitor, I extended a hand, offered a chair, and snapped open a cigarette case. Dawson seated himself and took a cigarette. I breathed more freely. He could not design my immediate arrest, or he would not have accepted of even so slight a hospitality. We sat upon opposite sides of the fire, Dawson saying nothing, but watching me in that unwinking cat-like way of his which I find so exasperating. Many times during my association with Dawson I have longed to spring upon him and beat his head against the floor—just to show that I am not a mouse. If his silence were intended to make me uncomfortable, I would give him evidence of my perfect composure.

"How did you find me out?" I asked calmly.

His start of surprise gratified me, and I saw a puzzled look come into his eyes. "Find out what?" he muttered.

"How did you find out that I wrote a story about you?"

"Oh, that?" He grinned. "That was not



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difficult, Mr.—er—Copplestone. I asked Mr.—er—Richard Cary for your real name and address, and he had to give them to me. I was considering whether I should prosecute both him and you."

"No doubt you bullied Cary," I said, "but you don't alarm me in the least. I had taken precautions, and you would have found your way barred if you had tried to touch either of us."

"It is possible," snapped Dawson. "I should like to lock up all you writing people—you are an infernal nuisance—but you seem to have a pull with the politicians."

We were getting on capitally: the first round was in my favour, and I saw another opportunity of showing my easy unconcern of his powers.

"Oh no, Mr.—er—William Dawson. You would not lock us up, even if all the authority in the State were vested in the soldiers and the police. For who would then write of your exploits and pour upon your heads the bright light of fame? The public knows nothing of Mr. ——" (I held up his card), "but quite a lot of people have heard of William Dawson."

"They have," assented he, with obvious satisfaction. "I sent a copy of the story to my Chief—just to put myself straight with him. I said that it was all qute unauthorised, and that I would have stopped it if I could."

"Oh no, you wouldn't. Don't talk humbug, Mr. William Dawson. During the past two months you have pranced along the streets with your head in the clouds. And in your own home Mrs. Dawson and the little Dawsons—if there are any—have worshipped you as a god. There is nothing so flattering as the sight of oneself in solid black

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print upon nice white paper. Confess, now. Are you not at this moment carrying a copy of that story of mine in your breast pocket next your heart, and don't you flourish it before your colleagues and rivals about six times a day?"

Alone among mortal men I have seen a hardened detective blush.

"Throw away that cigarette," said I, "and take a cigar." I felt generous.

Our relations were now established upon a basis satisfactory to me. I had no inkling of the purpose of his visit, but he had lost the advantage of mysterious attack. He had revealed human weakness and had ceased for the moment to dominate me as a terrible engine of the law. But I had heard too much of Dawson from Cary to be under any illusion. He could be chaffed, even made ridiculous, without much difficulty, but no one, however adroit, could divert him by an inch from his professional purpose. He could joke with a victim and drink his health and then walk him off, arm in arm, to the gallows.

"Now, Mr. Dawson," said I. "Perhaps you will tell me to what happy circumstance I owe the honour of this visit?"

He had been chuckling over certain rich details in the Hagan chase—with an eye, no doubt, to future enlarged editions—but these words of mine pulled him up short. Instantly he became grave, drew some papers from his pocket, and addressed himself to business.

"I have come to you, Mr. Copplestone, as I did to your friend Mr. Cary, for information and assistance, and I have been advised by those who know you here to be perfectly frank. You are not

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at present an object of suspicion to the local police, who assure me, that though you are known to have access to much secret information, yet that you have never made any wrongful use of it. You have, moreover, been of great assistance on many occasions both to the military and naval authorities. Therefore, though my instinct would be to lock you up most securely, I am told that I mustn't do it."

"You are very frank," said I. "But I bear no malice. Ask me what you please, and I will do my best to answer fully."

"I ought to warn you," said he, with obvious reluctance, "that anything which you say may, at some future time, be used in evidence against you."

"I will take the risk, Mr. Dawson," cried I, laughing. "You have done your duty in warning me, and you are so plainly hopeful that I shall incriminate myself that it would be cruel to disappoint you. Let us get on with the inquisition."

"You are aware, Mr. Copplestone, that a most important part of my work consists in stopping the channels through which information of what is going on in our shipyards and munition shops may get through to the enemy. We can't prevent his agents from getting information—that is always possible to those with unlimited command of money, for there are always swine among workmen, and among higher folk than workmen, who can be bought. You may take it as certain that little of importance is done or projected in this country of which enemy agents do not know. But their difficulty is to get it through to their paymasters, within the limit of time during which the informa-

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tion is useful. There are scores of possible channels, and it is up to us to watch them all. You have already shown some grasp of our methods, which in a sentence may be described as unsleeping vigilance. Once we know the identity of an enemy agent, he ceases to be of any use to the enemy, but becomes of the greatest value to us. Our motto is: Ab hoste doceri." He pronounced the infinitive verb as if it rhymed with glossary.

"You are quite a scholar, Mr. Dawson," remarked I politely.

"Yes," said he, simply. "I had a good schooling. I need not go into details," he went on, "of how we watch the correspondence of suspected persons, but you may be interested to learn that during the three weeks which I have passed in your city all your private letters have been through my hands."

"The devil they have," I cried angrily. "You exceed your powers. This is really intolerable."

"Oh, you need not worry," replied Dawson serenely. "Your letters were quite innocent. I am gratified to learn that your two sons in the Service are happy and doing well, and that you contemplate the publication of another book."

It was impossible not to laugh at the man's effrontery, though I felt exasperated at his inquisitiveness. After all, there are things in private letters which one does not wish a stranger, and a police officer, to read.

"And how long is this outrage to continue?" I asked crossly.

"That depends upon you. As soon as I am satisfied that you are as trustworthy as the local police and other authorities believe you to be, your

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correspondence will pass untouched. It is of no use for you to fume or try to kick up a fuss in London. Scotland Yard would open the Home Secretary's letters if it had any cause to feel doubtful of him."

"You cannot feel much suspicion of me or you would not tell me what you have been doing."

"You might have thought of that at once," said Dawson derisively.

I shook myself and conceded the round to Dawson.

"It has been plain to us for a long time that the food parcels despatched by relatives and 'godmothers' of British prisoners in Germany were a possible source of danger, and at last it has been decided to stop them and to keep the despatch of food in the hands of official organisations. Since there are now some 30,000 of military prisoners, in addition to interned civilians at Ruhleben, the number and complexity of the parcels have made it most difficult for a thorough examination to be kept up. We have done our utmost, but have been conscious that there has existed in them a channel through which have passed communications from enemy agents to enemy employers."

"I can see the possibility, but a practical method of communication looks difficult. How was it done?"

"In the most absurdly simple way. Real ingenuity is always simple. I will give you an example. An English prisoner in Germany has, we will suppose, parents in Newcastle, by whom food has been sent out regularly. He dies in captivity, and in due course his relatives are notified through the International Headquarters of the Red Cross

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in Geneva. He is crossed off the Newcastle lists, and his parents, of course, stop sending parcels. Now suppose that some one in Birmingham begins to send parcels addressed to this lately deceased prisoner, his name, unless Birmingham is very vigilant, will get upon the lists there as that of a new live prisoner. The parcels addressed to this name will go straight into the hands of the German Secret Service, and a channel of communication will have been opened up between some one in Birmingham and the enemy in Germany. Prisoners are frequently dying, new prisoners are frequently being taken. Under a haphazard system of individual parcels, despatched from all over the British Isles, it has been practically impossible to keep track of all the changes. For this, and other good reasons, we have had to make a clean sweep and to take over the feeding of British prisoners by means of a regular organisation which can ensure that nothing is sent with the food which will be of any assistance to the enemy."

"That is a good job done," I observed. "Have you evidence that what is possible has in fact been done?"

"We have," said Dawson. "Not many cases, perhaps, but sufficient to show the existence of a very real danger. It is, indeed, one particular instance of direct communication which has brought me to you to-day. Orders were given not long since that all new cases, that is, all parcels addressed to prisoners whose names were new to local lists, should be opened and carefully examined. Some six or seven weeks ago parcels began to be sent from this city addressed to a lieutenant in the Northumberland Fusiliers. There was nothing remarkable

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in that, for though we are some distance here from Northumberland, young officers are gazetted to regiments which need them irrespective of the part of the country to which the officers themselves belong. In accordance with the new orders all the parcels for this lieutenant—which usually consisted of bread, chocolate, and tins of sardines—were examined. The bread was cut up, the chocolate broken to pieces, and the tins opened. If the parcel contained nothing contraband, fresh supplies of bread, chocolate, and sardines to take the place of those destroyed in examination were put in, and the parcel forwarded. For the first two weeks nothing was found, but in the third parcel, buried in one of the loaves, was discovered a cutting from an evening newspaper which at first sight seemed quite innocent. But a microscopic search revealed tiny needle pricks in certain words, and the words, thus indicated, read when taken by themselves the sentence, ' Important naval news follows.' At this stage I was sent for. My first step was to inquire very closely into the antecedents of this lieutenant of Northumberland Fusiliers. I found that his friends lived at Morpeth, that he had been taken prisoner during the Loos advance of September 1915, and that he had died about a year later of typhoid fever in a German camp. His friends, as soon as they had been informed of the death, had stopped sending parcels of food out to him. They were not told the object of the inquiries. It would have caused them needless pain. It was bad enough that their only son had died far from home in a filthy German prison."

Dawson's rather metallic voice became almost sympathetic, and I was pleased to observe that his

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harsh profession had not destroyed in him all human feeling.

"After this you may suppose that the parcels addressed to our poor friend the late lieutenant were very eagerly looked for. The alleged sender, whose name and residence were written upon the labels, was found not to exist. Both name and address were false. It was a hot scent, and I was delighted, after a week of waiting, to see another parcel come in. This would, in all probability, contain the 'important naval news,' and I took its examination upon myself. I reduced the bread and the chocolate to powder without finding anything."

"Excuse me," I cried, intensely interested, "but how could one conceal a paper in bread or in chocolate without leaving external traces?"

"There is no difficulty. The loaves were of the kind which have soft ends. One cuts a deep slit, inserts the paper, closes up the cut with a little fresh dough, and rebakes the loaf for a short time, till all signs of the cut have disappeared. The chocolate was in eggs, not in bars. The oval lumps can be cut open, scooped out, a paper put in, and the two halves joined up and the cut concealed by means of a strong mixture of chocolate paste and white of egg. When thoroughly dried in a warm place, chocolate thus treated will stand very close scrutiny. I did not trouble to look for signs of disturbance in either loaves or eggs; it was quicker and easier to break them up. I then addressed my attention to the sardine tins, which from the first had seemed the most likely hiding-places. A very moderately skilled mechanic can unsolder a tin, empty out the fish and oil, put in what he pleases in place, weight judiciously, and then re-

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fasten with fresh solder. I opened all the tins, found that all except one had been undisturbed, but that one was a blissful reward for all my trouble, for in it was a tightly packed mass of glazier's putty, soft and heavy, and at the bottom the carefully folded paper which I have now the honour of showing to you."

Dawson handed me a stiff piece of paper, slimy to the touch and smelling strongly of white lead. Upon it were two neatly made drawings and some lines of words and figures. "It is just what I should have expected," said I.

"You recognise it?"

"Of course," said I. "We have here a deck plan showing the disposition of guns, and a section plan showing arrangement of armour, of one of the big new ships which has been completed for the Grand Fleet. Below we have the number and calibre of the guns, the thickness and extent of the armour, the length, breadth, and depth of the vessel, her tonnage, her horse power, and her estimated speed. Everything is correct except the speed, which I happen to know is considerably greater than the figure set down."

"You have not by any chance seen that paper before?" asked Dawson, with rather a forced air of indifference.

"This? No. Why?"

"I was curious, that's all." He looked at me with a queer, quizzical expression, and then laughed softly. "You will understand my question directly, but for the moment let us get on. What sort of person should you say made those drawings and wrote that description?"

I am no Sherlock Holmes; but any one who has

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had some acquaintance with engineers and their handiwork can recognise the professional touch.

"These drawings are the work of a trained draughtsman, and the writing is that of a draughtsman. One can tell by the neatness and the technique of the shading."

"Right first time," said Dawson approvingly. "At present I have that draughtsman comfortably locked up; we picked him out of the drawing office at ——" he named a famous yard in which had been built one of the ships of the class illustrated upon the paper in my hands.

"Poor devil," I said. "What is the cause—drink, women, or the pressure of high prices and a large family?"

"None of them. His employers give him the best of characters, he gets good pay, is a man over military age, and has, so far as the police can learn, no special embarrassments. He owns his house, and has two or three hundred pounds in the War Loan."

"Then why in the name of wonder has the *schweinehund* sold his country?"

"He declares that he never received a penny for supplying the information upon that paper, and we have no evidence of any outside payments to him. He did not attempt to conceal his handwriting, and when I made inquiries of his firm, he owned up at once that the paper was his work. He said that for years past he had given particulars of ships under construction to the same parties as on this occasion. He admitted that to do so was contrary to regulations, especially in wartime, but thought that under the circumstances he was doing no harm. I am not exactly a credulous person, and

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I have heard some tall stories in my time, but for once I am inclined to believe that the man is speaking the truth. I believe that he received no money, and was acting throughout in good faith."

"I am more and more puzzled. What in the world can the circumstances be which could induce an experienced middle-aged man, employed in highly confidential work in a great shipyard, not only to break faith and lose his job, but to stick his neck into a rope and his feet on the drop of a gallows. Reveal the mystery."

"You are sure that you have never seen that paper before?" asked Dawson again, this time slowly and deliberately.

"Of course not!" I said. "How could I?"

"That is just what I have to find out," said Dawson. He stopped, took out a knife, prodded his nearly smoked cigar, puffed once or twice hard to restore the draught, and spoke. "That is what interests me just now. For, you see, this very indiscreet and reprehensible swinehound of a draughtsman, who is at present in my lockup, declares that he was without suspicion of serious wrong-doing, because—because—the particulars of the new battleship upon that paper were supplied to YOU."

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# CHAPTER III

## AN INQUISITION

PERHAPS I ought to have seen it coming, but I didn't. For a moment, as a washerwoman might say, I was struck all of a heap. Then the delicious thought that I—by nature a vagabond, though by decree of the High Gods the father of a family and a Justice of the Peace—had to face the charge of being a German spy shook my soul with ribald laughter. I had been dull and torpid before the arrival of Dawson ; he had awakened me into joyous life. I arose, filled and lighted a large calabash pipe, and passed a box of cigars to the detective. "Throw that stump away and take another," said I. "I owe you more than a cigar or two." He stared at me, took what I offered, and his face relaxed into a grin. "It is pleasant to see that you are a man of humour, Mr. Dawson," I observed, when we were again seated comfortably on opposite sides of the fire. "In my day I have played many parts, but I cannot somehow recall the incident of unsoldering a sardine tin, inserting a paper packed in a mess of putty, soldering it up, and despatching the incriminating product within a parcel addressed to a late lieutenant of Northumberland Fusiliers. I am not denying the charge ;



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the whole affair is too delightful to be cut short. Let us spin it out delicately like children over plates of sweet pudding."

"You are a queer customer, Mr. Copplestone. I confess that the whole business puzzles me, though you and your friends here seem to find it devilish amusing. When I told the Chief Constable, the manager of the shipyard, and the Admiral Superintendent of Naval Work that you were the guilty party, they all roared. For some reason the Admiral and the shipyard manager kept winking at one another and gurgling till I thought they would have choked. What *is* the joke?"

"If you are good, Dawson, I will tell you some day. This is November, and the *Rampagious*—the ship described on your paper—left for Portsmouth in August. In July——" I broke off hurriedly, lest I should tell my visitor too much. "It has taken our friend who put the paper in the sardine tin three months to find out details of her. I could have done better than that, Dawson."

"That is just what the Admiral said, though he wouldn't explain why."

"The truth is, Dawson, that the Admiral and I both come from Devon, the land of pirates, smugglers, and buccaneers. We are law breakers by instinct and family tradition. When we get an officer of the law on toast, we like to make the most of him. It is a playful little way of ours which I am sure you will understand and pardon."

"You know, of course, that I am justified in arresting you. I have a warrant and handcuffs in my pocket."

"Admirable man!" I cried, with enthusiasm. "You are, Dawson, the perfect detective. As a

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criminal I should be mightily afraid of you. But, as in my buttonhole I always wear the white flower which proclaims to the world my blameless life, I am thoroughly enjoying this visit and our cosy chat beside the fire. Shall I telephone to my office and say that I shall be unavoidably detained from duty for an indefinite time? 'Detained' would be the strict truth and the *mot juste*. If you would kindly lock me up, say, for three years or the duration of the war I should be your debtor. I have often thought that a prison, provided that one were allowed unlimited paper and the use of a typewriter, would be the most charming of holidays—a perfect rest cure. There are three books in my head which I should like to write. Arrest me, Dawson, I implore you! Put on the handcuffs—I have never been handcuffed—ring up a taxi, and let us be off to jail. You will, I hope, do me the honour of lunching with me first and meeting my wife. She will be immensely gratified to be quit of me. It cannot often have happened in your lurid career, Dawson, to be welcomed with genuine enthusiasm."

"Why did that man say that he prepared the description of the ship for you?"

"That is what we are going to find out, and I will help you all I can. My reputation is like the bloom upon the peach—touch it, and it is gone for ever. There is a faint glimmer of the truth at the back of my mind which may become a clear light. Did he say that he had given it to me personally, into my own hand?"

"No. He said that he was approached by a man whom he had known off and on for years, a man who was employed by you in connection with



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shipyard inquiries. He was informed that this man was still employed by you for the same purpose now as in the past."

"Your case against me is thinning out, Dawson. At its best it is second-hand; at its worst, the mere conjecture of a rather careless draughtsman. I have two things to do: first to find out the real seducer, who is probably also the despatcher of the parcels to the late lieutenant of Northumberland Fusiliers, and second, to save if I can this poor fool of a shipyard draughtsman from punishment for his folly. I don't doubt that he honestly thought he was dealing with me."

"He will have to be punished. The Admiral will insist upon that."

"We must make the punishment as light as we can. You shall help me with all the discretionary authority with which you are equipped. I can see, Dawson, from the tactful skill with which you have dealt with me that discretion is among your most distinguished characteristics. If you had been a stupid, bull-headed policeman, you would have been up against pretty serious trouble."

"That was quite my own view," replied Dawson drily.

"Who is the man described by our erring draughtsman?"

"He won't say. We have put on every allowable method of pressure, and some that are not in ordinary times permitted. We have had over this spy hunt business to shed most of our tender English regard for suspected persons, and to adopt the French system of fishing inquiries. In France the police try to make a man incriminate himself; in England we try our hardest to prevent him. That

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may be very right and just in peace time against ordinary law breakers; but war is war, and spies are too dangerous to be treated tenderly. We have cross-examined the man, and bully-ragged him, but he won't give up the name of his accomplice. It may be a relation. One thing seems sure. The man is, or was, a member of your staff, engaged in shipyard inquiries. Can you give me a list of the men who are or have been on this sort of work during the past few years?"

"I will get it for you. But please use it carefully. My present men are precious jewels, the few left to me by zealous military authorities. What I must look for is some one over military age who has left me or been dismissed—probably dismissed. When a British subject, of decent education and once respectable surroundings, gets into the hands of German agents, you may be certain of one thing, Dawson, that he has become a rotter through drink."

"That's it," cried Dawson. "You have hit it. Crime and drink are twin brothers as no one knows better than the police. Look out for the name and address of a man dismissed for drunkenness and we shall have our bird."

"The name I can no doubt give you, but not the address."

"Give us any address where he lived, even if it were ten years ago, and we will track him down in three days. That is just routine police work."

"I never presume to teach an expert his business—and you, Dawson, are a super-expert, a director-general of those of common qualities—but would it not be well to warn all the Post Offices, so that when another parcel is brought in

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addressed to the lieutenant the bearer may be arrested ? ”

Dawson sniffed. “ Police work ; common police work. It was done at once for this city and fifty miles round. No parcel was put in last week. The warning has since been extended to the whole of the United Kingdom. We may get our man this week, or at least a messenger of his, but no news has yet come to me. I will lunch with you, as you so kindly suggest, and afterwards I want you to come with me to see the draughtsman in the lockup. You may be able to shake his confounded obstinacy. Run the pathetic stunt. Say if he keeps silent that you will be arrested, your home broken up, your family driven into the workhouse, and you yourself probably shot. Pitch it strong and rich. He is a bit of a softy from the look of him. That tender-hearted lot are always the most obstinate when asked to give away their pals.”

“ Do you know, Dawson,” I said, as he went upstairs with me to have a lick and a polish, as he put it—“ I am inclined to agree with Cary that you are rather an inhuman beast.”

My wife, with whom I could exchange no more than a dozen words and a wink or two, gripped the situation and played up to it in the fashion which compels the admiration and terror of mere men. Do they humbug us, their husbands, as they do the rest of the world on our behalf ? She met Dawson as if he were an old family friend, heaped hospitality upon him, and chaffed him blandly as if to entertain a police officer with a warrant and handcuffs in his pocket were the best joke in the world. “ My husband, Mr. Dawson, needs a holiday very badly, but won't take one.

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He thinks that the war cannot be pursued successfully unless he looks after it himself. If you would carry him off and keep him quiet for a bit, I should be deeply grateful." She then fell into a discussion with Dawson of thé most conveniently situated prisons. Mrs. Copplestone dismissed Dartmoor and Portland as too bleakly situated, but was pleased to approve of Parkhurst in the Isle of Wight—which I rather fancy is a House of Detention for women. She insisted that the climate of the Island was suited to my health, and wrung a promise from Dawson that I should, if possible, be interned there. Dawson's manners and conversation surprised me. His homespun origin was evident, yet he had developed an easy social style which was neither familiar nor aggressive. We were in his eyes eccentrics, possibly what he would call among his friends "a bit off," and he bore himself towards us accordingly. My small daughter, Jane, to whom he had been presented as a colonel of police —little Jane is deeply versed in military ranks— took to him at once, and his manner towards her confirmed my impression that some vestiges of humanity may still be discovered in him by the patient searcher. She insisted upon sitting next to him and in holding his hand when it was not employed in conveying food to his mouth. She was startled at first by the discussion upon the prisons most suitable for me, but quickly became reconciled to the idea of a temporary separation.

"Colonel Dawson," she asked. "When daddy is in prison, may I come and see him sometimes. Mother and me?" Dawson gripped his hair—we were the maddest crew!—and replied, "Of course you shall, Miss Jane, as often as you like."

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