A CIPHER TELEGRAM

By JANE PINCKNEY BENNETT

When the Russo-Japanese war broke out Anna Zarenski, who had just become betrothed to Captain Paul Mickhaleff, was obliged to part with her lover, who was ordered with his regiment to Manchuria. It was a love match between them, and Anna suffered tortures at the approaching separation.

"Paul, dear," she said to him, "can you not send me a telegram every day instead of a letter? Any letter I may receive from you will be several weeks old."

"My darling! A telegram every day! Do you suppose the government would permit the wires to be put to such a use? Suppose all the lovers in the army were to have such a privilege accorded them. There would be no time for military dispatches. Besides, a telegram is open for others to read."

"Can't you telegraph in cipher?"

"A cipher telegram over a government wire? Such a thing would send us both to Siberia."

But Siberia was better than the deprivation of two lovers to send loving words, and the young officer said that he would try to bribe an operator and send her just one little message by telegraph. But they must have a code for together they arranged a very simple one. If a sentence began with the letter A, it meant "I love you as ever;" if it began with B, "I am well;" C, "I am ill;" D, "Wounded;" E, "I am lonely without you;" F, "A thousand kisses;" G, "I have escaped being injured in the recent battle," and so on to the end of the alphabet.

The captain left her, promising to do all he could to get her telegrams through, though he must use a large corruption fund. Money is a potent factor among Russian officials, and he succeeded in sending a number of messages. He did not attempt to send a dispatch after a fight, when the telegraph line was crowded with government dispatches. They were all placed in the hands of the operator when no fighting was going on, to send when he could.

One day after receipt of one of Anna's most loving letters Paul decided to reply over the wires. Taking his telegram to an operator whom he had already paid large sums, he handed him his telegram, slipping 50 rubles in his hand at the same time. The operator laid the message aside till he could get rid of a number of orders being transmitted to the supply department at St. Petersburg, but before he had sent them all a skirmish commenced with the Japanese, which ended in a battle.

It was not till the fight neared its termination that a rush of telegraphic messages began. While the struggle was going on the operator had found time to send Paul's message. It reached St. Petersburg just as the government was expecting news of the result of the battle. The telegraph being in the hands of the government all offices were closed. The only instrument in use was in the cabinet of the czar. While his majesty and his minister of war were eagerly awaiting news from the seat of war a message was clicked off for Anna Zarenski as follows:

A bird in the hand. Every dog has his day. Fortune favors the brave. Keep off the grass. PAUL

A terrible scowl gathered on the brow of the minister of war as he read the words and handed the message to the emperor.

"A telegram in cipher, your majesty," he said.

The czar read it, and he, too, scowled. "Telephone the police," he said, "to arrest Anna Zarenski and bring her here. Have her produce the key to her cipher code under pain of instant death."

When Anna was arrested she was frightened out of her senses. She made matters worse by at first refusing to give up the code and only did so when told that it was by the czar's order and the penalty for withholding it instant death. She was put into a carriage, taken to the Winter palace and brought before the emperor, and the high officials gathered about him.

"What treasonable document is this?" said the czar, handing her Paul's dispatch. Anna took it, blushing like a rose. She was very pretty and, traitor or no traitor, made an attractive picture.

"Take the key," said the emperor, "and interpret the dispatch."

"I beg your majesty to direct some one else to interpret it."

"Obey the order," said the czar sternly.

Anna began the interpretation.

"A bird in the hand." She hesitated. "I love you as ever." "Every dog has his day." "I am lonely without you." She was too mortified to go on.

"Proceed," said the czar.

"Fortune favors the brave." "A thousand kisses." "Keep off the grass." "Goodby, my angel."

The czar's features relaxed. Calling for the key, he revised himself that the interpretation was correct.

"Yes, we forgive," he said, holding out his hand for her to kiss.

Dropping on one knee, she pressed her lips to it in gratitude for the pardon.

"And your lover is included in the pardon," added the czar. "Give your [illegible] I shall make his name as gov[illegible] [illegible] Kiss a smile, he dismissed her.

Bubbles.

Writing to a friend, the author of "European Years" includes what he terms "a couple of bubbles" in one letter. One, he says, he found in the London Telegraph, the other he does not account for.

Well, this is the bubble: The new bishop of New Zealand, in a farewell and pathetic interview with his mother after his appointment, was thus addressed by her, in such sequence as sobs and tears would permit: "I suppose they will eat you, my dear. I try to think otherwise, but I suppose they will. Well, we must leave it in the hands of providence. But if they do, mind, my dear, and disagree with them."

Another bubble, and a very tiny one: Foster arrived late for his dinner, apologized for being late, explaining that he had been detained by having to stand godfather to one of Charles Dickens' children. "I hope," said Douglas Jerrold, "that if you gave the child a mug, it wasn't your own."

Young Doctor, Big Pill.

"I had got my medical education by the hardest work," said the doctor, "and had hung out my shingle. I had expected to have to wait for the first patient, but not to have to wait so long. Finally, however, the call came. It was to a little house on the edge of town, and when I got there I found a woman sick with I had no idea what. I made out a 'pill prescription' for her, and for fear that I shouldn't earn my money I wrote nearly the whole materia medica into it. Then I told her to send it to the nearest drug store and have it filled, and then I left. After an hour or two a small, shock headed boy appeared at my office, which was over the bank and approached by outside stairs. Was I the doctor that had just been at his maw's house? His maw's house corresponded with the house I had just visited, so I was the doctor. 'Well,' he went on, 'my maw says how you expect her to swallow that air pill? She ain't no hoss.'"—New York Post.

Business Instinct.

"A strange kind of thrift was brought to light when I advertised a ring that I had found," a woman said. "Among the communications I received was a letter from a woman who frankly admitted that she had not lost a ring.

"'But I want to buy one,' she said. 'If the one you found is not claimed by the owner and if you do not wish to keep it I will pay according to value and assume all responsibility.'

"The ring was not claimed, and I invited my correspondent to call. She bought it at a price that was cheap for her and munificent for me.

"'I get half the really nice things I have by answering lost and found advertisements,' she said. 'Many persons holding unclaimed articles prefer the money to the goods and let them go at bargain prices advantageous to both.'"—New York Times.

Musical Note.

Lord North was once asked why he did not subscribe for a certain series of concerts, as his brother, the bishop, had done. "If I were as deaf as my brother," he answered, "I would." In the Musical Amateur Mr. Robert Haven Schauffler tells Berlioz's story of the young woman in the music store to indicate the sort of performer whose audience would find deafness a positive boon.

"But, mademoiselle," suggested the clerk, "will not this piece in five sharps perhaps be rather too difficult?"

"Pooh!" she replied disdainfully. "That is all one to me. Whenever I find more than two sharps or flats I scratch them out with my penknife."

A Perplexing Question.

The funny man in the party said: "Can you name an animal that has eyes that cannot see, legs and cannot walk, but can jump as high as the Eiffel tower?"

Everybody racked his brains, and there was deep silence for awhile, and then they all gave it up.

"The answer," said the funny man, "is a wooden horse. It has eyes and cannot see and legs and cannot walk."

"Yes, but how does it jump as high as the Eiffel tower?" asked one.

"The Eiffel tower," said the funny man, as he made preparations for hurried departure, "can't jump."

Clever Deduction.

"My son," explained the new client, "had a dog named Crimson. This dog was taught to growl when anybody mentioned Yale."

"One minute," interrupted Sherlock Holmes. "I deduce from this that your son went to Harvard."

"So he did!" exclaimed the new client.

"Marvelous!" cried Dr. Watson.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Quite Familiar.

"There is not much in a name perhaps," said a young Sunday school teacher. "Still it did give me a turn last Sunday when I asked a boy in my class how many apostles there were to have him look up and reply carelessly, 'Oh, a dozen or so!'"

Tribute.

Knicker—So Jones is a famous crank? Bocker—Yes. When he dies they will stop the wheels in everybody's head for five minutes.—Philadelphia Ledger.

He Knew.

Employer (to applicant)—Do you know anything about an elevator? Applicant—Sure! I was brought up on one!—New York Times.

The one who refuses to be beaten must eventually be the victor.

THE TURNING POINT

By M. QUAD

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"Are we much of a town?" repeated Uncle Jed as he removed his hat and scratched the back of his head and looked up and down Swan Creek's only business street.

"No, stranger, I can't stay as we are, but there's a good reason for it. This burg was jest a-booming when a preacher headed it for its downfall and thought he was doing a wondrous good thing.

"It was twenty years ago and there were more liars to the square foot in Swan Creek than in any other town in America, when one of the churches changed its pastors and got a high stepper. One day as I met him on the street he stops me to ask:

"'Brother Hopkins, can you tell me why it is that about thirty of our leading citizens gather at the postoffice every week day evening of the year?'

"'Well, it is the Liars' club. It meets there every evening except Sunday and would meet then if the postoffice was kept open.'

"'Let me understand this thing,' says the good man. 'Do you mean that these citizens knowingly falsify?'

"'Certainly.'

"'But why?'

"'So as to be at the head of the class. There's Uncle Hezekiah Davis. He was once chased by a rattlesnake. There was only one snake when he first told of it, but now he has got the number up to thirteen and is still gaining. There's Deacon Spooner. He had a brother'—

"'But you don't mean that Deacon Spooner lies?'

"'You may judge for yourself. He had a brother who went west and was chased by Indians. After telling the story three or four times a week for ten years the deacon has got it that he was run for seven miles and shot through the calf of the leg.

"'Can't you come down tonight?' I asked. 'Josiah Flintheart is due to tell his. He always tells his lie Tuesday night. His hired man found a tramp in the barn years ago, but Josiah makes out that it was he who found two robbers under the bed in the house and captured both of them. Our Liars' club is going over to Dobbs Ferry some day soon to hold a lying match with the liars of that place.'

"The good man went away with a stern look on his face, and it was not long before we heard from him. He called us up one by one and said that the club had to be broken up forthwith, and two evenings later Deacon Spooner announced the solemn fact from the postoffice steps. Two days later Ebenezer Jackson came back to town after a visit to Troy. He heard of the calamity at once, and he stood upon a barrel and said:

"'In the name of Liberty I protest. I have just returned from Troy with a new lot of lies about Troy laundries, and I propose to get them off or perish in the attempt. I respect ministers of the gospel as much as the next man, but they can't gag me. Let the club meet as usual tonight and hear my new stock of lies.'

"But the club didn't. The ex-members wouldn't even listen to Ebenezer as individuals.

"Ebenezer had a wife and three children. In about a week, without saying a word to anybody, the house was shut up and the family were gone. They were away for a week. When they returned they moved about among other families more than ever before, and four or five days later there was a scare. Ebenezer came down with the measles. His wife had some sort of epizootic, one of the children had whooping cough, another had chickenpox and the third had the itch.

"'Uncle Jed knew where these things could be picked up,' replied Ebenezer when charged with bringing them back to town on purpose, 'and so I thought I would make old Swan Creek lively for a little while. When a fellow can't go down to the postoffice of an evening and swap a few gentle lies with other liars he must find amusement in some other direction.'

"No one living in Swan Creek that summer will ever forget it. The disease took hold of old and young, and we had to send for extra doctors and nurses. No one died, but for a month the place was like a graveyard. According to the doctors, the minister who was responsible for this state of affairs had measles, epizootic and whooping cough all at once, and it was when he was the sickest that he sent for Deacon Spooner, who could just crawl around, and suggested that the club be resurrected, but the suggestion could not be carried out for lack of liars. All the rest of them were on their backs.

"In time everybody got well and business picked up again, but the club was never re-established, and the town has never fully recovered from the blow of its dissolution. Nearly all the male inhabitants come down to the postoffice of an evening to get their mail, and they sit around and whittle and look at one another in a longing way.

"Sometimes a tin peddler or a parlor organ man staying in the town over night and not posted on its past history will start out to tell a whopping lie to interest others, but there is never any comment or applause. His story falls flat, and he rises up, brushes the dust and whittlings off and [illegible] silently saying to himself:

"'Well, by thunder, if this isn't the dullest town I ever struck in my travels!'"

Fritz Obeyed the Rule.

Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche in her biography of her celebrated brother, Fritz Nietzsche, speaks much of his childhood. Serious as he was—the pupils of the municipal school at Naumburg called him "the little minister"—he was now and then the occasion of amusement. One such occurrence, which became a standing joke, is related as follows:

One day, just as school was over, there was a heavy downpour of rain, and we looked out along the Priestergasse for our Fritz. All the boys were running like mad to their homes. At last little Fritz also appeared, walking slowly along, with his cap covering his slate and his little handkerchief spread over the whole. Mamma waved and called out to him when he was some way off, "Run, child, run!" The sheets of rain prevented us from catching his reply. When our mother remonstrated with him for coming home soaked to the skin he replied seriously: "But, mamma, in the rules of the school it is written, 'On leaving school boys are forbidden to jump and run about in the street, but must walk quietly and decorously to their homes.'" Fritz had obeyed this rule under the most adverse circumstances.

Wanted What He Paid For.

The average Englishman is public spirited and, for the public good, denounces any imposition upon himself, no matter how slight it may be. On the summit of the Rigi mountain, in Switzerland, there is a hotel frequented by people who wish to see the sun rise over the Alps. A "complaint book" is kept in which travelers record real or fancied grievances. Recently this book was found to contain the following entry:

"I desire to call the attention of the management and the general public to the fact that I have been here two mornings for the express purpose of seeing the sun rise from this mountain and that on both occasions I have seen nothing whatever but clouds. One failure to keep the understanding with me—an implied contract—I might have passed over, but two failures I regard as a distinct imposition. J. Rominson, Liverpool."

A Little Nonsense.

"It is a great mistake for adults, and especially those who work with their brains much, to give up sports and games," said Herbert Spencer. "The maxim upon which I have acted is, Be a boy as long as you can."

The Scientific American gives some illustrations to show that really great scientists are not dry as dust old fogies, but are full of fun and often of frivolity. It cites the famous X club, of which such men as Darwin, Tyndall, Hirst, Spottiswoode, Huxley, Hooker, Busk, Avebury, Spencer and Frankland were members. It had no rules, but skeletal minutes were kept.

"Talked politics, scandal and the three classes of witnesses: Liars, liars and experts."

The members used to have excursions, to which they took their wives, as recorded by the algebraic notation, "X's + Ives."

An Audacious Schoolboy.

The audacity of Warren Hastings as a Westminster schoolboy in carving his name beneath the clock on the western tower of the abbey pales before the audacity of another Westminster schoolboy, who secreted himself in the abbey in fulfillment of a wager that he would sleep in the abbey, notwithstanding the report that the ghost of Bradshaw, the president of the court at the trial of Charles I., who in the time of the commonwealth occupied the deanery, haunted the building. He spent the night in the abbey and occupied his time in carving his name on the coronation chair, which bears to this day the following rudely cut inscription: "I, Peter Abbott, slept in this chair."—Dundee Advertiser.

Tower of London.

A royal palace, consisting of no more than what is now known as the "White Tower," appears to have been the beginning of the Tower of London. It was commenced in 1078 by William the Conqueror and finished by William's son, William Rufus, who, in 1098, surrounded it with walls and a broad ditch. Several succeeding kings made additions to it, and King Edward III. erected the church. In 1638 the old White Tower was rebuilt, and in the reign of Charles II. a great number of additions were made to it. The new buildings in the Tower were completed in 1850.

Called His Bluff.

"Sarah," said Mr. Jolliboy to his wife as he finished his breakfast, "I shall not be home to dinner tonight. My old friend Bill Peters is in town."

"Good!" said Mrs. Jolliboy. "That suits me to a T. I'm not going to be home to dinner myself. My old friend George Watkins telephoned me yesterday"—

Both dined at home.—Harper's Weekly.

His Standing.

"That young fellow seems to have made himself solid at your house."

"Yes; I judge he has. Ma is looking up his family, while pa is investigating his commercial rating."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Spirit of the Times.

It is an age of artificial devices. Rare, indeed, is the man and rarer still the woman in whose physical makeup there is not something false, either eyes or teeth or hair.—Atlantic.

It is easy to make acquaintances. But difficult to shake them off.—Washington.

He Showed Them a Neat Trick

By F. A. MITCHEL

A man alighted from a stagecoach—this happened when most of that region lying beyond the Missouri river was known as the wild and woolly west—at a point called Silver City.

He wore an alpine hat, a tweed suit, fashionably cut, with flaps on the hip pockets; tan gaiters and highly polished shoes. Crossing his waistcoat was a gold watch chain, and in one eye he wore a single glass. The only ornament on him was a cross, apparently made of bronze, which dangled from the watch chain.

"Beg pa'don," he said to a man who stepped out of a saloon, "could you tell me what time the stage going north comes along?"

The questioned man was so astonished at the questioner's makeup—remarkable for that country at that time—that he forgot to reply, but stood gaping at the well dressed man as if he were an apparition sprung from the bowels of the earth.

"And I beg your parding, stranger," said the man from the saloon. "Would you mind tellin' me where the show is you come out of?"

"I don't think I quite understand you."

"One o' the wax figgers, I surmise."

By this time another man had emerged from the saloon with a long red mustache, a red face and smelling of liquor.

He, too, started at beholding the gentleman in the tweed suit.

"I'm making for Canada," said the latter. "I'm to take the coach here. Would either of you mind telling me where the booking office is?"

"The booking office!" exclaimed the last comer. "What's a booking office?"

The stranger dropped his monocle by winking and regarded the speaker with surprise.

"Don't know what a booking office is? Why, it's one of those places where a fellow takes a seat in a coach."

"You don't mean it! Do you know how to dance?"

"I do."

"Well," drawing an enormous revolver from his hip, "suppose you show off some."

"Oh, let him alone, Jim," said the man whom the stranger had first addressed. "He's a wax figger of the Prince o' Wales from a museum."

"I reckon the prince knows how to dance," said Jim, and he knocked the stranger's hat off with a bullet.

"Oh, I don't mind dancing a bit for a fine gentleman like you. But how would you like a handful of gold pieces instead?"

"Do you take me for a road agent?" asked Jim.

"You mean a highwayman? No, indeed. But you feel at liberty to ask me to dance, don't you?"

"Reckon we like to give a man a chance to show off all there is in him."

"Well, I'd much rather satisfy you in some other way. You see, there's no place here for dancing. I can't dance in the road, you know."

"You can't, eh?"

Jim fired another shot that whizzed within an inch of the Britisher's ear.

"Now, suppose I show you a new trick with coins," said the latter. "I've won no end of money at it. I took in £200 aboard ship coming over."

This was something the toughs could understand.

"What do you say, Bill? Shall we take his game instead of a dance?"

"Reckon," acquiesced Bill.

"Go in, Mr. Wax Figger, and don't be too slow about it. It's a hot day, and you might melt before you show us your trick."

Jim lowered his revolver, and Bill stood with his thumbs in his belt. The Britisher began his exhibition.

"I have half a crown in me right hand pocket and a sovereign in me left. Now, I'll put a hand in each pocket, this way." He crammed a hand down into each pocket. "Then I'll pull 'em out like this." He drew a fist doubled up from each pocket. The audience stood looking at him with evident interest. Each fist as it came out of its pocket was drawn up under a large cuff, so as to be partly concealed. "Now, I want you to tell which hand holds the half crown and which the sovereign."

He extended one hand toward Jim and the other toward Bill. Something cracked; a puff of smoke ensued from his right fist, and Jim fell forward with a bullet in his brain.

"Hands up!" said the wax figger to Bill.

Bill saw the trick in an instant, and, knowing that before he could get his hand to his hip and draw his revolver the stranger would serve him with the other hand, as he had served Jim, his hands went up in a hurry. The Britisher went to him and detached his revolver. Several persons loitering near heard the shot and saw Jim fall. They approached the Britisher and heard his story. He showed them a short Derringer pistol he held in each hand. Only one shot without reloading could be fired from each, but they were capable of being concealed.

"You see," said the stranger, "I was told there was shooting going on out here, and I prepared myself."

"What's that cross you wear on your watch chain, stranger?" asked one of the party.

"Oh, that's a bit of a trinket I got in the Boer war last summer."

"A kind of a medal?"

"Yes."

"Any special name for it?"

"The Victoria cross."

"Renewed His Courage."

"Jabe Mathis of the Thirteenth Georgia was a good soldier," said General Longstreet, "but one day, when the Confederates were retreating from the gory field of Gettysburg, Jabe threw his musket on the ground, seated himself by the roadside and declaimed with vehemence: 'I'll be dogtoned if I walk another step! I'm broke down. I can't do it.' And Jabe was the picture of despair.

"'Git up, man,' exclaimed the captain. 'Don't you know the Yankees are following us? They'll get you sure.'

"'Can't help it,' said Jabe. 'I'm done for. I'll not march another step.'

"The Confederates passed along over the crest of a hill and lost sight of poor, dejected Jabe. In a moment there was a fresh rattle of musketry and a renewed crash of shells. Suddenly Jabe appeared on the crest of the hill, moving with hurricane swiftness and followed by a cloud of dust. As he dashed by his captain that officer said:

"'Hello, Jabe! Thought you wasn't going to march any more?'

"'Thunder!' replied Jabe as he hit the dust with renewed vigor. 'You don't call this marching, do you?'"—Kansas City Star.

Simplicity of Jenny Lind.

Jenny Lind must have been the most simple, unpretending prima donna that ever lived. When she first visited England she was bound to sing only at the Royal Italian Opera House, and when commanded to sing at the queen's concert she was obliged to refuse. Very sorry to be compelled to notify this, she ordered her carriage and drove straight to Buckingham palace. She handed her card to an official, who, not unnaturally, declined to take it. A higher authority happened to pass and took it upon himself to present it. As soon as her majesty saw it she said, "Admit her by all means." Jenny Lind appeared and said simply that she was so very sorry to be unable to sing at her majesty's concert that she thought it better to call herself and explain. The queen was charmed with her natural manner, gave her a cordial reception and promised to be her friend.

Battle of Armageddon.

Readers of the Bible know that the battle of Armageddon, which in the revised version is Harmageddon, is to be the last conflict between the hosts of the Lord and all the powers of darkness. It is prophesied in Revelation xvi. 16, "And he gathered them together in a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." The name comes from har megiddo, the mountain district of Megiddo—the mountain land of Israel. There is where the stars fought against Sisera, as narrated in the book of Judges, and where Josiah, rebellious king of Judah, was slain by Pharaoh, king of Egypt. The "battle of Armageddon" is used symbolically to describe any great conflict, but in its original meaning it referred to the final struggle which is to precede the millennium.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Consistency.

A correspondent of an English paper tells how some one visited a wild beast show and saw a countryman come in bearing unmistakable signs of having had a glass too much. A tiger scratched the back of the hand with which the man grasped a bar of the cage. The laceration was severe, and the pain was great. The sufferer danced about and twirled his shillalah, crying: "Let him out! Let him out till I have me will av him!" A companion tried to soothe the irate dancer with this neat impromptu: "Never mind, Pat. Sure, he only wanted to scrape acquaintance wid ye."

Whittier's Good Wishes.

A young woman once sat at a boarding house table beside a reserved and awkward country boy whom she delighted to tease. When she left she asked him to write in her autograph album. The poem which John G. Whittier wrote there stands as a warning to other young ladies that she who laughs first at a seemingly dumb countryman may be herself laughed at many years later. The quaint concluding stanza is:

Thy life—may nothing vex it,
Thy years be not a few,
And at thy final exit
May the devil miss his due.

Children of Today.

Modern children are very precocious. A Mount Washington man asked his little nephew if he knew who Cinderella was.

"Sure!" said the urchin. "I've seen her."

"You've seen her?" gasped his uncle, in astonishment.

"Sure! I've seen her. She's a character in a musical comedy."—Pittsburgh Post.

Good Amendment.

Husband—This cake is very good, my dear, but it seems to me there ought to be a little more— Wife (in clear, icy, incisive tones)—That cake came by mail and was made by your mother. Husband—Yes, as I was saying, there ought to be a little more—of it.

Only in a Business Way.

"So Clara rejected the plumber."

"Do you know why?"

"Somebody told her to be careful about encouraging him, as he hit the pipe."—Baltimore American.

As to Success.

Griggs—I should say that the two keys to success are luck and pluck. Briggs—Sure! Luck in finding some one to pluck.—Boston Transcript.

He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that.