

A DIPLOMATIC EPISODE

It Occurred in Connection With the War Between the States

By HUDSON E. EASTON

Everybody who knows anything of the diplomatic history attending our internal war knows that Napoleon III endeavored to induce England to join him in intervening and putting an end to the struggle by a division of the states. It is equally well known that the czar of Russia, not content with neutrality, said to the ambassador of France, "Tell your master that if he interferes in the American civil war I will strike him." At the same time he showed his readiness to stand by the federal government by sending a fleet to New York.

This is history, or rather a synopsis of the diplomatic history of that time. But in diplomacy, while the results come out, the moves on the chess board that go to make a game usually remain secret. True, now and again some one of these moves leaks out, but it never bears the official stamp of truth. The following episode is a case in point:

One day the American minister in St. Petersburg called an official of the embassy into his private office and said to him:

"I have just come from an audience with the czar. He has told me that he has sent word to the emperor of France that he will not permit the dismemberment of the American republic by European interference. But the czar fears that Napoleon will induce England to join him in intervening before the latter learns of the czar's position. England once committed cannot well withdraw, and England and France together will be too strong for Russia, especially as the matter would be fought out on the water. It is of vital importance that the British government be at once advised of the czar's position, and I wish you to carry an official communication to that effect—warn you that that fox, Napoleon, has the best spy system in the world, and it exists right here in St. Petersburg as it does in Paris. The French ambassador will endeavor to keep the English government in ignorance of the czar's stand as long as possible, so that her master may make an English alliance for the purpose of intervention before the czar's intention is known in Downing street."

"We are watched by French spies. Our mail is going through the Russian post is watched by Russian officials in the pay of the French ambassador. There is no avenue that is not spied upon. Your going will be known, and only the most necessary vigilance will enable you to get to London with your message. If possible do not sleep on the way." "That same evening the official, whom we shall call Roger Coleman, entered a railway station in St. Petersburg and was making his way to a vestibule train when a railway official, with a "This way, sir," led him to a coach, opened a door and put him in. There was but one vacant seat, and as soon as Coleman had filled it the official shut the door and locked it.

At the first stop most of those who were in the compartment—with Coleman got out, and at the second station the seats were all left vacant except one occupied by a young girl. Several persons, seeing that there were only two persons in the compartment, started to enter it, but they were told by an official standing by the door to go to another coach. Some time before the train moved on he shut the door and locked it.

The light in the coach being poor, Coleman folded his arms, closed his eyes and leaned his head back on the cushion. He had no intention of going to sleep. He was simply thinking of the journey before him and wondering how he would be interfered with if at all. For some time he sat perfectly motionless. Then between his eyelids he saw the girl, who sat on the other side of the coach and opposite him. He began to look at her. Suspecting her, he began to breathe like a sleeper and finally to snore. Then she reached for his traveling bag, which he had placed on the seat beside him. Coleman snored lustily. The girl opened the bag, and her face lighted up with pleasure at seeing a passport lying on the very top of some toilet articles. Withdrawing it, she thrust it in her bosom, shut the bag and, leaning back in her seat, pretended to sleep.

Instead of endeavoring to prevent the theft, Coleman snored on. And this is what he said to himself: "That being one of several passports I have with me, I shall not be delayed by its loss. I was guided to this compartment by a railroad official or a man disguised as a railroad official in the pay of the French ambassador, the compartment having been previously packed by the same person with those who held tickets for the first and second stations on the route. This girl was to be left alone with me to steal my passport."

At the next station the girl left the coach, and Coleman, being alone in the compartment and learning from the guard that the train did not stop again for an hour, got a little sleep. After the next stop there was some talk the train reached Vilna, and since no one got in with Coleman, he slept till reaching that city. The next important stop he

reached after having crossed the border was Koenigsberg in Germany, and from there, after skirting the Baltic, he passed through Hamburg and Bremen and reached Holland without adventure. Indeed, he did not look for his enemies in Germany, believing that Holland, being much nearer Paris, would be a far better ground for their operations. He purposed to cross the North sea from Rotterdam.

Besides his hand bag, Coleman carried with him a leather portmanteau, but his official letter from the American minister at St. Petersburg to the prime minister of England he carried on his person. On entering Holland in order to outwit his enemies he kept his portmanteau on the floor of the compartment who seemed to be ill, leaning her head back on the cushion and closing her eyes. At the first stop after her entrance she said, evidently with effort, to Coleman:

"Would, monsieur, be so good as to go into the station and bring me a glass of water? I am suffering with a burning thirst."

"Certainly," replied Coleman, and he went for the water. When he returned the sick lady and his suit case were both gone. Those in the coach told him that the lady, fearing he would be left and parted from his baggage, had got out, taking the portmanteau with her. He did not think it worth while to look for her, so, handing the glass of water to a waiter he had brought with him from the station, not forgetting a tip, he entered the coach, and the train sped on. He regretted the loss of his clothes, but once more he had fooled his enemies and at the same time had learned their tactics.

Unfortunately this gave him a present false security. A passenger, taking out a cigarette case, asked the only two other passengers besides Coleman for permission to smoke. It was granted, and Coleman also assented. All were becoming drowsy when they were startled by a crash of a window pane. Coleman, having suddenly become suspicious that the fumes of the cigarette the man was smoking was drugged, feeling himself coming under its influence, had swung his hand bag against the glass. A current of air at once restored those affected, but no one seemed to understand why Coleman was so disturbed. A few minutes later the train stopped at a station, and the smoker got out.

On approaching Rotterdam Coleman nervously himself for the crowning attack of his journey. Undoubtedly some one person had planted these traps in his way and had been informed of their failure. He would therefore instruct his hirelings to prevent at all hazards the passage of the traveler across the channel. The main danger would be in going from the railway station to the boat. On alighting at the former Coleman, carrying his bag in one hand and a cane he had brought from St. Petersburg in the other, entered the street. It was growing dark, and he feared, as might be, might through some of the narrow streets without being observed.

He was passing through one of the narrowest, dimly-lit streets of Rotterdam when he saw a man ahead of him emerge from a passageway and look about him. Realizing that he would probably be taken in front and rear at the same time, Coleman glanced back and saw another man, coming toward him. Hurrying forward, when he reached the man in front he followed him directly in his way and asked him in French the time. Coleman held his hand and his cane in his left hand, holding the handle of the cane with his right, he pulled it over, the other hand, holding a small, dark, box, long and thin, and held it point down over the head of the man who blocked his way. The fellow ducked and ran like a deer behind him. Coleman took advantage of his absence to dodge into the passageway from which his adversary had emerged and ran for an open street, feeling an empty cab standing by the curb, he stepped in, told the coachman to drive him to the boat and was rolled away.

He was now near the water and had only to pass from land to sea. When he alighted from the cab he saw a man standing with a paper in his hand beside the gangway. On reaching the shore end of the gangway the man stepped in his way and began to read something to him. Coleman, understanding this to be a process of law to delay him and noticing that the man was standing very near the edge of the dock, pretending to believe he was in danger of being left, rushed to ward the gangway and over it, knocking the process server into the water. A policeman stood ready to follow the reading with an arrest, but the attention of every one was diverted to the man spluttering in the water. Coleman, taking advantage of the diversion, ran aboard the boat and, going down into the hold instead of up into the cabin, found a convenient cranny in which to hide.

The boat did not leave for two hours, but either the hunters for the message bearer gave up the chase or could not find their man. As soon as the boat had left the dock Coleman went into a stateroom, locked the door and throwing himself on a berth, went to sleep.

He did not awaken till the boat touched the English coast. Then, rousing himself, he went ashore, took a train and in a few hours was in London.

Here the narrative which was written by Coleman to his wife in 1865 and from which this story has been taken ends. There is no mention of the presentation of the information before to the English government, but the fact remains that Napoleon III failed signally to induce England to interfere in American affairs.

HE TOOK HIS MEDICINE

And Didn't Squall Either

By F. A. MITCHEL

I reached my friend Mark Appleton's country house in time to dress for dinner and congratulated myself at having before me a very pleasant visit, but I did not foresee an episode that was destined to overshadow my intimacy with Mark and with other results of still greater importance.

The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Appleton, Miss Clara Digby, and their brother Tom, aged eighteen. Tom, I was told, was suffering with a bilious attack and was confined to his room. I found Miss Clara a very delightful young lady, and during the dinner she seemed very responsive to an admiration I could not conceal. During the evening we all played bridge whist. Mr. Appleton being my partner. But this did not prevent an undercurrent of mutual interest that was continually passing between the young lady and myself.

Having finished the evening, Mark showed me to my room, which was one of four bedrooms on the second floor, two on each side of the hall. I noticed that the doors of my room and the one adjoining were side by side. It occurred to me that I would not like to try to enter my chamber in the dark, for I would be likely to get into the other room. I fell asleep thinking of Clara Digby and the pleasures in store for me the next day.

I was awakened by feeling a spoon shoved against my mouth. It was warm and contained a warm liquid. Half awake, I opened my lips, and the contents of the spoon passed down into my stomach. I recognized it as beef broth. When I had swallowed the first spoonful another was placed against my lips, and I swallowed that, too. Another was put against my chin, and that was swallowed.

"There," said a voice which I recognized as that of Clara Digby, "you should have let me light the gas."

By this time I was awake and knew that my hostess's sister was in my room giving me a midnight lubection intended for a sick man. But a surprise like that sprung on a man sound asleep is not an easy one for him to tackle. My reasoning powers worked slowly. If they had not I should probably have blurted out, "What in the world are you doing here?" or some such question.

As it was, it took time for the possible outcome of the episode to work into my brain. Presently I came to realize that Miss Digby had made a mistake and that upon recognizing her position she would be very much pained. "Should I apprise her of the fact that she was in the wrong room or wait for her to go out in ignorance of the fact?"

While I was deliberating she fed me the remainder of the broth. Then, saying that she had forgotten to give me my medicine, she went to a closet, and I heard her fumbling among some bottles. "I hope I won't poison you," she said, "but I can't see in the dark. I've got it. It's the little square bottle." And she put a spoonful of medicine down my throat, and placed the spoon, with her saying, "put down the spoon, with 'Good night, hope you'll be better in the morning,' she went out, shutting the door behind her.

At first I congratulated myself that I had not ruffled her modesty by betraying her blunder, but I soon came to rue my silence. The dose she had given me made me deathly sick. I remembered her words, "I hope I won't poison you," and I began to fear she had. I managed to get out of bed, lit the gas and made a search for the square bottle from which she had given me my medicine. I found two square bottles, one labeled, "Dose, one tablespoonful every six hours," the other, "Three drops in half a glass of water."

Great heavens! I had probably taken drops by the spoonful. There was no time for fooling. I went into the hall and called lustily for Mark. He came into his nightshirt and asked wildly what was the matter.

"Poisoned!" I cried, and, going back into my room, fell on the bed.

I have ever since been proud of my gallantry in protecting Miss Digby. When Mark came in, asking half a dozen questions at once, I paid no attention to them, but called on him for an emetic.

He ran hurriedly downstairs, awakening the household as he went, and in a few minutes returned, with some mustard water. I drank it and threw the broth, the medicine and everything else off my stomach. By this time Mrs. Appleton and Miss Digby, in wrappers and curl papers, came into the room to see if I had expired or could be saved. The moment I got the confounded dose off my stomach I felt better and was satisfied that no serious results would follow.

I now fixed my mind on another possible curious result and how to avert it. I must keep the secret. That was very well to resolve, but doing it was another matter.

"What in thunder," cried Mark, his irritation rising with his relief, "has the waves of the sea after the wind been gone down, did you want to poison yourself?"

There stood Clara, looking as if she

JACK AND THE HAT

A Mischance That Ended Well

By CLARISSA MACKIE

Jack DeLainoff left the office of Dr. A. F. Fild and walked toward the Broadway street.

"Going down?" asked the grocery man, and Jack said that he was going to see a friend.

"Or a superintendent of a lunatic asylum?" suggested her husband, with a sneer. "There's a law against such a thing. I'm going to call for the police."

"Oh, please don't!" cried Miss Digby, wringing her hands.

At this moment a young fellow appeared at the open door in his night-shirt. He was very pale. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"Go back to bed," said Mark.

"Clara," said the young man, who was Tom Digby, the real invalid for whom I had suffered, "I thought you were going to give me my medicine at 12 o'clock."

I looked at Clara, wondering what she would say. Would she give herself away after all I had done for her?

"I didn't wake up," she faltered.

"Well," said Mark, "you women had better go to your rooms. I'll see that he's all right, remaining with him as long as necessary. Good night, all of you."

The ladies left us, Clara giving me a look that I construed to be one of gratitude. That it meant a great deal I could not doubt, but so many things that I couldn't be sure which precedent. As soon as they had gone Mark said to me:

"Have you got any more of the stuff about you?"

"No," I replied honestly. "I took it all."

"Where's the bottle?"

"It was in the wash-basin."

He looked at me, pressed his lips, and said, "There's something queer about this. I don't understand it. Are you taking the truth?"

My conscience began to prick me for the lies I had told. At this last question I weakened and went from black lie to white lie.

"I am truly," I replied, "I took a whole swallow of what is usually given in drops."

"I thought you said it was tablets you took."

"No, it was. I am speaking relatively."

"You're lying, and you know you're lying."

Mark remained with me a while longer, then consented to go back to bed, on my promise to call him if I felt the least need of assistance. Before closing the door he turned and said:

"Are you sure this woman is over?"

"Oh, go to bed," I said impatiently. "I wish to go to sleep."

He gave me another suspicious look then left me.

The next morning when I appeared at the breakfast table all looked at me anxiously. "Miss Digby had been taken inside out. I didn't look like a man, and I don't feel like a man, especially as to how I was regarding her about the cause of the trouble. Clara had not been speaking to her, but she was the whole meal. Mrs. Appleton looked at me, and Mark looked at me, and I was very much disgraced. If I had been sure I had tried to commit suicide he would have felt more comfortable.

Mrs. Appleton insisted on my going out on to the porch and lying on a wicker lounge, for the weather was warm, and I was very glad to do so. During the morning when I was alone Clara came out, and after trying to pull herself together by doing things for me I didn't need, suddenly faced me and said:

"Thank you very much."

"Oh, yes. You're quite welcome."

"You are a very—very—"

"What?"

"Accomplished liar."

"Just so—in a good cause. It's too bad you didn't wake up in time to give your brother his medicine."

"That wasn't entirely untrue."

"I think I took mine very well."

"Indeed you did."

"I couldn't have poisoned myself in a better cause than for love, could I?"

"No," she said, turning away.

"It came to me all of a sudden, but was no less real."

There was no reply to this. I reached forward and felt for her hand. She tried to prevent me, but didn't try very hard.

"I hope you're not going to drive me to another attempt," I added.

There was no reply to this either. We heard a step and a rattle within, and I dropped the hand. Mrs. Appleton came out to find her sister covering my feet with an Afghan.

"A pretty pair, you two," she said.

"Next time we're going to die together," I remarked.

"How often have I warned you, Clara, not to give or take medicine in the dark?"

Clara looked patient and that's the end of the story, except that before I left Clara and I were engaged, and I had Mark, the whole story. He's just a thousand times sadder, each time talking to it on his own account.

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