

Who Captured Him?

Was It a French War Detective or a Pretty Girl?

By JOHN Y. LARNED

When the great European war broke out Arthur Eggleston, a young American reporter, happened to make his way in the world, full of the vigor of youth and not aware of the danger that lay in wait for him. He took the first steamer for London that sailed and he did not arrive at that city until the time arrived at that city.

Crossing the channel with a contingent of British troops, he landed at Ostend during that period when the German forces were hammering at the forts of Liege and the French and British forces were endeavoring to resist the invasion into France. He applied for permission to attach himself to the British headquarters, but was refused on the ground that no newspaper correspondents would be allowed to accompany the army. At the French headquarters he received the same response to his application.

Eggleston, having lost the Atlantic ocean and the British troops, reported the big fight, determined to follow in the allies' rear, hang about their flanks, anything except get in their way, and report what he could gather. He found himself at Lille when the allied armies had begun their retreat, but before they had returned to that city he also found the General Safety, a detective force used to hunt down and eradicate spies. When one is hunting for any particular thing the identity of which is doubtfully very apt to find it. With a list of spy hunters in the field a safe row set up to keep the crowd away from the corn is not safe.

Eggleston was walking in Lille one day when a file of French soldiers under the command of a lieutenant came down the street, stopping persons here and there. The American did not dream of danger and when they reached him and the officer demanded to know who he was, where he had come from and where he was going, told him that he was newspaper correspondent looking for news. The officer, not being satisfied with this, informed him that he must take him to the headquarters of the General Safety.

Eggleston was conducted to a building in a room of which an officer, sitting behind a desk, regarded him intently. The Frenchman began asking him questions in French, and Eggleston understood most of them, answering without hesitation, but when his question branched into German the American showed plainly that he did not understand. It did not occur to him that the man suspected him of being a German spy and was trying to catch him. Possibly Eggleston, although ignorant of his position, produced it. This established the fact that he was an American, and he was thereafter treated with great consideration.

Eggleston spent some time in Lille without being permitted to go near the armies. One day he was walking along a residence street when he heard a feminine voice say in French:

"Monsieur, have you any news of the armistice? Will they come this way? We are all packed ready to move."

Turning, he saw a pretty girl looking out of a window. He had studied the French language at school and had picked up a Frenchman on the way across the Atlantic, with whom he had talked incessantly in order to gather enough French to enable him to get on in France. So he replied as best he could that he was profoundly ignorant of what was going on at the front. He was trying to get there, but this far had been unsuccessful. Noting that his French was not of the best, the girl asked him if he were not English. No, he was American. The English were very popular since they had come to assist the French but before that Americans were the best liked. An elderly lady came to the window and eagerly asked for news and gave Eggleston an invitation to come in. He accepted it. A glass of wine was brought out and the three discussed the probabilities of the family having to leave their home and cart their belongings across country to the coast as the Belgians were doing.

And so it happened that Eggleston, instead of writing up the number of guns, the explosion of shells, the rattle of rifles, the groans of the wounded, spent several days dallying with a pretty girl at the end of which time she came to him, and while they were yet in the distance he helped his friends the Legation, to remove their effects or a small portion of them to a cart he secured for them and saw them on their way to the southward after which he began to do some work as a war correspondent.

Eggleston, keeping as near the line as he dared, preceded their retreat toward the capital. When the tide turned he was on the allies' left flank and one day after witnessing some very hard fighting went into a town on the west bank of the river Oise to write up copy and send it by courier to the coast to be forwarded.

He was sitting in the writing room of the only hotel in the place when a man came in and, bending over him, began to peruse what he was writing.

"Are you a censor?" asked Eggleston, looking up with a scowl.

"I am an officer of the General Safety," replied the man, "Who are you?"

"I am an American newspaper correspondent, writing an account of today's battle and in a hurry."

"English?"

"No, American."

"I would like to see your passport," said Eggleston.

Eggleston took his passport from his pocket, threw it on the table and went on writing. The man picked it up, opened it, read it and compared the personal description with the correspondent.

"Eyes blue, hair light; The Germans all have blue eyes and light hair. Gertrude? What do you mean? Don't you see that the passport reads 'A citizen of the United States?'"

"Monsieur, you may as well own up; first of all, you are a German spy. I begusted pushed back his chair and stared at the man.

"German spy? Why, my dear fellow, I am an American. Can't you read English?"

"The passport has been stolen. The Germans took it from an American. You need not try to deceive me. We have received a warning."

"What warning?"

"A German who has lived in England, who speaks English like a native, who looks like an Englishman, armed with the American's passport, is with the American's army. We have received orders to look out for him and if he takes him to shoot him at once."

Eggleston smiled. He was aware that the keen sense of spy hunters was leading the detectives to make short work of suspicious persons and he supposed he was to be taken out to be shot. But, musingly, he was in Lille a few days ago, where I made the acquaintance of those connected with the General Safety. They will touch down and eradicate spies. When one is hunting for any particular thing the identity of which is doubtfully very apt to find it. With a list of spy hunters in the field a safe row set up to keep the crowd away from the corn is not safe.

"That is one of the hardships of war. We can take no risks. Besides, those men in little may have been taken out of you."

"Who did the Germans refer to?"

"Yesterday."

"I met the General's officer."

"At this moment?"

"In the room and looking at you as a house would look at a spy. The two Frenchmen in the room were talking about the matter and looking at you of the sheet before him, according to read a third man was called into the room, who, having been instructed to approach the American and send him to the German."

"If you will confess your life will be spared."

Eggleston, who did not understand a word of what was said to him, but recognized that it was in the German language, replied:

"Never, never."

This was quite enough for the Frenchman, who held that the "ditch version" was full proof that the subject was a German. However, after deliberation they concluded to refer the case to some one higher up, so they placed Eggleston under guard for the night.

But the allied were at that time too busy fighting for any one in authority to pay any attention to an individual case. The next morning, no reply having been received concerning the subject, they decided to conclude that he was best to take no risks, but shoot him, though they did not like to do so on an uncertainty for in case he should be what he pretended they would be liable to get themselves into trouble.

The four of battle at this point broke and at times more distant than one occasion when the guns were louder Eggleston's captors decided to bring him to a town farther west. During the journey they were about to cross a road running north and south and had stopped to let a train of refugees pass when among the latter Eggleston caught a glimpse of the pretty girl he had met in Lille.

"Monsieur," he shouted.

"Louis Legris turned and seeing the American who had assisted the family in the hour of need, clasped her hands with French fervency and called her mother's attention to him.

A halt was called and the refugees and the detective came together for a conference. Both mother and daughter were horrified when they learned that the son American was to be shot as a spy. They told the story of having seen him in Lille about a week before and how he had assisted them. This was positive that he was not traveling on a captured passport, for he had shown it to an officer of the General Safety corps in their presence and Louise, who had never seen a passport before, had examined it from curiosity.

Eggleston's captors apologized for having intended to shoot him as coming from having unintentionally caught him passing. They dismissed him and the last seen of him he had joined the Legation and that is the last that has been heard of him. His reports to his paper suddenly stopped. There are those who suspect that this ending of the story is incorrect and that he was really shot as a spy. But such persons do not consider that there is all ways danger of a man being carried away by a pretty girl even if there are plenty of warriors handy to do the job.

A BLAZE IN JAPAN

Yelling Mobs Through the Streets When a Fire Starts.

IN A FRENZY OF EXCITEMENT.

Every Native in Town Makes a Mad Dash For the Scene of the Conflagration and Chaos Reigns Supreme. Even a Small Fire is a Big Event.

A fire is a great event in Japan. One would think that, inasmuch as the busy construction of the Japanese houses and their packing together make fires of almost daily occurrence in the cities at any rate, they would have lost a portion of their novelty during the ten or fifteen centuries Japan has regularly been burning down. They have not. When the fire bell begins to toll the whole population goes to the fire.

I was in a Jiarukisha in Yokohama on my way to the railroad station when I heard the clangor of a bell and the crowd who was drawing me shouted "Kwaji! Kwaji!" or what sounded like that and displayed strong evidence of breaking into a gallop.

"What is that?" I inquired of a Jiarukisha-remembering from my phrase book "What is that?"

"Kwaji!" he shouted. "Kwaji!"

And so it felt out that we went to the fire; the crowd, the Jiarukisha and myself for I had no words to stop him except a very uncertain "Tomaru!" And he did not choose to obey.

The crowd gathered down one street and up another, and in ten minutes I was in the midst of a great fire and in every eye of Japanese dress, and all running backward and forward. Not a man walked. All ran. They were so interested and excited that they thought they must be shareholders in the shanties which were burning.

A man pushed wildly to one end of the street, blowing people out of his way, stepping on them, pushing against them and then he stopped, emitted a wild scream and dashed back again. I saw one man fall that. In reality a thousand did it on each of the four sides of the block in which the fire was, unaccountably and in a casual and unhampered manner, demolishing some small houses.

Other thousands, many of them running this way a few steps and that way a few steps, all by their side a man stood still, except himself and I soon saw that the Japanese people, with excitement, were bounding into the street from all sides.

Presently the flames came. They dashed in from a quarter of the city, demolishing little houses, carts, tables and filling white and red flags.

The hydrants in Yokohama are in abundance below the surface of the streets. The firemen joined in the yelling throng. They ran back and forth, and the spectators ran back and forth after them. There was much shouting and gestulation. Every fireman, whether regular or volunteer, seemed to be a chief. They all gave orders, and the crowd obeyed, as if they were in a country village at home.

There were ten or fifteen minutes of this running back and forth and shouting by the firemen. Then some thin streams of water began to sprinkle on the fire. Also, a few big engines began to squirt. Meantime the firemen were paying no attention to the houses on fire, but were trying to keep other houses from burning. A few of them rode slates from adjacent roofs and cast them indiscriminately into the crowd. Women with bundles of household belongings straggled out of the houses that might catch fire. More thousands came. For four blocks each way the streets were packed from roof to wall with excited people all running back and forth and all shouting.

I had to elude my crowd with my cane to make him start with me to the station, and he looked backward over his shoulder all the while I was depriving him of a real pleasure—taking some thing out of my life by not allowing him to stay and help put out that fire.

It seems almost superfluous to say I missed my train or that the Jiarukisha man, bowing and smiling, remarked "I am sorry for you." However, that made me later in getting back that night, and as I went up dark and deserted Water street in Yokohama I heard music ahead of me a kind of music and tune that sounded familiar.

Presently I overtook the musician. He was a Japanese youth, straggling along on his wooden clogs, wearing a derby hat and clad in a kimono, and he was playing on a mouth organ "Shall We Gather at the River?" Wherein, was illustrated and exemplified the old and the new Japan. Samuel G. Hythe in Saturday Evening Post.

The Good Old Times.

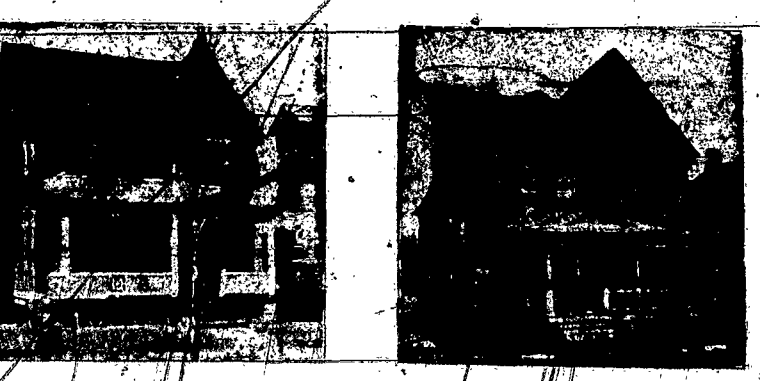
At one time in some of our cities were auctioned off in public to the highest bidder. In that time there was not considered so much of a disgrace as being caught at it.

IN A FRENZY OF EXCITEMENT.

Our prisons are not ideal, but we have made progress in dealing with crime. There were formerly fourteen offenses in Delaware punishable by hanging. In the early history of Connecticut lying "that foule and gross sin" was punishable with five stripes at the whipping post and confinement in stocks, people were imprisoned in awful dungeons for debt. In Rome men were sold into slavery to pay debts; creditors could take the body of the debtor to pieces, each receiving a piece according to the size of his credit.

Today is the last day creation has ever seen. For 2,000 years the Sermon on the Mount, like heaven, has been permeating the hearts of men. At last only that which is good can endure. The time of time burn out the dress.

There is "one far off divine event, to which all eyes are turned." It is perfection, but it is not here. Leslie.



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